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[THE LAST SHOT.]

FICKLE FORTUNE.

By the Author of "Maurice Durant," etc.

CHAPTER XXXV.

So part we sadly in this troublous world  
To meet with joy in sweet Jerusalem.

Shakespeare.

THE Black and the Chestnut were prancing about the large room, terrified and excited by the unwonted uproar.

Shouting to Cecil to unbolt the outer door, Laurence called the Black to him, and, snatching at the bridle of the Chestnut, led them with all possible rapidity into the court.

"Quick!" he cried, as Cecil stood panting beside him and the rearing, plunging animals. "Spring on the Chestnut, lad, and clear the fence."

And as he spoke he sprang upon the back of the Black, holding the Chestnut as still as he could for Cecil to mount.

The youth made a vain effort to reach the saddle and with a cry of vexation attempted a second. But before he could do more than tug at the bridle and prepare for the spring the door behind him swung open, and with an awful yell Tim, followed by Sam and another runner, staggered out.

Cecil uttered a low cry of despair, but Laurence drowned it in a shout of defiance, and suddenly sweeping down upon the terrified lad caught him, and with a mighty effort placed him on the saddle in front of him. Then with a shout of encouragement to the gallant horse put him at the fence.

He cleared it with a bound, and, shaking his black mane as if in scorn of all pursuit, dashed at the prairie like an eagle.

Sam uttered a yell of disappointment and a bullet whizzed past the fugitives.

Laurence ground his teeth, and drawing the pistol from his saddle turned and took as deliberate aim as was possible.

"One last shot, Cecil, lad," he said, as the youth shuddered and hid his face in his hands. "One last

bullet, and may Heaven direct it where 'tis due, to the heart of the black miscreant who has shed all this blood! Ah!" he cried, with a mighty shout of joy. "He has it! Look, lad—look, Cecil!"

Cecil took his hands from before his face and saw the staggering form of Tim lying writhing upon the ground and knew by the yells and execrations of his companions that Laurence had dealt out the fit punishment of death.

"Oh, Laury, Laury!" he cried, "let us fly like the wind. I am sick and faint to death with all this terrible night. Oh, oh, oh!"

"Poor lad," breathed Laurence, bending a look of pitiful commiseration upon the youth's white and weary face. "These scoundrels will be on our track directly or we would rest. Alas, I fear me that the poor master has fallen to their scoundish rage."

"Poor Mr. Stewart! Oh, Laury, do you think he can have escaped?"

"Impossible to say," replied Laurence, sadly. "We are all in high hands, lad, and a chance may have opened out for him as it has done for us. Thank Heaven the Chestnut and the Roan are left if he should be able to reach them."

Cecil hid his face in his hands and cried bitterly. "He was so kind to me, Laury, and—and—oh, I feel as if I had killed him with my own hand. What a miserable, unfortunate creature I am!"

"Hush, lad," said Laurence, looking round as he spoke and urging the horse on with a touch of his hand. "Hush, lad; you did your duty, and we must all do that, come what will of it. There, Cecil, cry no longer. 'Tis no more use crying over spilt blood than spilt milk. Rest your head here."

And with a gentler hand than one would have thought his strength and roughness capable of he drew the lad nearer to him until his head, weary, sick and sorrowful, rested against his broad breast and the dark, luxurious hair fell upon his bridle arm.

Thus he remained, and as the gallant horse, regardless of his double burden, sped on with swift flight and undaunted courage the tired Cecil fell asleep,

and the man who had saved him from death, looking down upon his girlish face, saw by the light of the coming dawn that a deep and glorious look of peace had settled upon it, which set him wondering how the lad could smile even in sleep after such a night of horrors.

But gradually as he gazed upon the beautiful face upon his breast the charm fell upon him too, and he felt stealing over him a strange mystic happiness, peace, and serenity that were surely born of his burden or else were unearthly and mysterious.

As the sun rose he started and passed his hand across his brow as one does waking from a dream, and, loth to wake the youth, drew rein and looked round for some suitable resting-place.

Whatever pursuit had been commenced had been long since discontinued, the wild flower-plain behind them was undotted by human or beast form, and the farm was miles and miles in the rear.

The sturdy, careworn cattle-runner sighed deeply and gazed at his dust-stained garments with a look of stern sorrow.

"It would seem a dream but for these tell-tale spots!" he muttered. "Poor Stewart and poor lad!" turning to Cecil—"what is to become of you I wonder, turned adrift upon the cold, heartless world once more?"

For himself he thought and cared nothing; but on Cecil's account he was perplexed and troubled.

The Black needed rest too much, however, for him to sit in the saddle any longer, and so, though much against his will, he woke Cecil by calling his name.

The youth started and opened his dark eyes with a questioning gaze.

"Laury! where are we? Ah!"—with a sigh—"I remember. Poor Black! He has carried us both. I have been asleep, Laury, and dreaming—dreaming so happily too! It seems almost wicked to be happy even in sleep after such terrible things."

Laurence helped him down with a sad smile.

"Don't think any more of it, lad, than you can help. Thank Heaven it is far behind now."

Cecil sighed.

"What is to be done, Laury? And where are we going?"

Laurence shook his head.

"I don't know, lad; it is all a problem to me. For myself I care nothing. There is a home for me while the wood and the plain are left. But for you, who are young and hopeful, we must find some other and better chance."

Cecil turned pale.

"You will not leave me, Laury?" he asked, imploringly.

"No, lad—at least until you are safe in some place of safety; I am thinking even now where that place may be."

"Why can't I stay with you, Laury?" asked the youth, his eyes filling with tears and a slight blush relieving the pallor of his face.

"Because—for a hundred reasons, lad," said Laurence, gravely, turning as he spoke behind the Black into the shelter of some trees.

Cecil started and looked alarmed, but the next words relieved him.

"For one because I would not waste another life as well as my own. You are young and clever, Cecil; there should be and are brighter things than a cattle-runner's life awaiting you. We must go to the Bay, lad, and wait for chance."

Cecil turned pale but silently helped him unsaddle the Black, a strange look of resolution mingled with indecision hovering over his face.

"When shall we go, Laury?"

"To-day when the Black is rested, lad," replied Laury. "We must get some food and drink first and then start without loss of time."

"Why such hurry, Laury?" asked Cecil, with averted eyes. "Are you in such haste to be rid of me?" This he said in a piqued tone and with a threatening of tears in the dark eyes.

A spasm of pain passed across the cattle-runner's stern face, but he replied, calmly enough:

"No, lad; Heaven knows I'd give much to keep you with me, but duty is duty, Cecil; and as you are thrown upon my charge by fate I'll not risk its vengeance in playing false to your welfare."

The youth turned to him with an arch look of daring.

"And suppose 'the lad,' being his own master, refuses to be disposed of in this Laury-like way?"

"Then—" retorted Laurence, but as if unable or unwilling to continue the warfare broke off, and said instead: "Tush, lad! no more; I am sick at heart and weary. Leave it to me. What you wish is impossible. We must part at the Bay."

Then he turned away to the stream as if to hide his own emotion and therefore did not see the look of misery and anguish that passed over the face of Cecil.

Some bread that happened to be in Laurence's saddle-wallet and a small snipe he shot served them for dinner; which meal was eaten almost in silence, for Laurence was sad almost to sternness and Cecil did not trust to speak for the load of apprehension that lay upon his gentle heart.

After dinner Laurence groomed the Black, and in as few words as possible intimated that they must start.

"For the Bay, Laury?" asked Cecil, with an upward glance.

Laurence nodded, and they started, Laurence in the saddle and Cecil behind, the Black taking no notice of the double burden, and starting away as if the gallop of the preceding night was nothing but a shadowy dream.

In silence still they reached a wood, and here Laurence intended staying the night.

Cecil, anxious to forestall his every request, searched out a suitable spot and commenced building a fire while Laurence took his revolver and lay in the bushes a few yards off, waiting for the approach of something for supper.

A small deer fell beneath his deadly aim and soon a couple of steaks were frying over the blaze.

Then they talked, but in a subdued tone, and with a strange sort of reserve that was the result not so much of the fearful scenes they had just gone through as of a mysterious feeling palpable yet indescribable, a feeling that portended almost of foreboding sorrow in both hearts.

They sat watching the fire for some time after the steaks had been eaten, Laurence smoking his pipe and Cecil lying full length with his head upon his elbow and staring mournfully at the flickering flames.

Then Laurence secured the Black within reach of some grass and found a secluded and sheltered little arbour for Cecil.

"Here, lad," said he, kindly, "there's almost a four-post bedstead for you. Go in and get to sleep and I'll curl myself up beside the fire."

Cecil bid him good-night and turned in as ordered

—but not to sleep until the stars had lit up the heavens and twinkled upon the still form of the man who had been guide, monitor and more than friend. On the morrow they were up early and on their road, and travelling thus, losing no time and saying but little, they had come within half a dozen miles of the Bay.

Then Cecil, able to bear up no longer, burst into a quiet flood of tears and seemed heartbroken.

"Oh, Laury, don't be angry! But I am so dreadfully sorry that you are going to leave me! Why don't you let me stay with you? I'd try and not be a trouble."

Then, stopped by the look of suppressed emotion in the man's face, which had turned white, he hid his face in his trembling hands and said no more.

Laurence spoke never a word, but rode on grim and stern. He could not trust himself to speak and was ashamed of the pain that literally burnt in his heart at the thought of parting with this weak, gentle-hearted boy who had won upon him so mysteriously.

The wooden houses of the Bay came in sight.

Cecil, unable to cry any longer through sheer despair, uttered a half-choking moan and clung to Laurence's arm.

The Black pulled up at the well-known corner, and Laurence, dismounting, put out his hand to help Cecil down.

The youth took one glance at his handsome face, and, seeing its sad, and unsteady, cried, in broken tones:

"Laury, forgive me! I didn't mean to—break down. But you and I have been such good friends. Where should I be now but lying cold and dead if it was not for you?"

Laurence's face worked.

"Ay, lad," he said, simply, "we've been good friends. The world will seem darker when you're gone."

And he gazed wistfully at the tearful face beneath him.

"What are you going to do with me, Laury?" asked Cecil, looking up at him with such woeful helplessness that the cattle-runner turned his head away from the sight of it.

"Heaven knows, lad," he said. "Stay here—here on this spot while I ride into the town. I know some settlers who would be glad to have you."

"Oh, let me come, Laury," implored Cecil.

"No," said Laurence, though reluctantly. "You are tired and will rest better there. I will put the Black to it and be back before the quarter has turned."

The youth sank into the rough seat and turned his head away.

He longed with a passionate longing to go with him for the last few moments they were to have together, but shame or some other feeling kept him silent. He leapt to his feet though when the man he loved had turned, and watched him as a criminal condemned to die watches the sky, the sun, the flowers he will see but for a few minutes longer.

Laurence rode hard and was out of sight in a few minutes.

Cecil sank on to the seat again, and dropping his head in his hands fell to crying silently.

From this attitude he was aroused by the sound of approaching footsteps, and, turning to see whence they proceeded, saw that a boat had come ashore from one of the ships that lay at anchor in the Bay and that half a dozen sailors were coming up the beach.

Looking at them with that idle, half-unconscious gaze with which one looks when too sick and sore at heart to feel interested in anything, Cecil was astonished to see the whole gang suddenly assume a crouching attitude and approach the spot where he sat as if desirous of doing so secretly and unseen.

Looking round to ascertain the cause of the manoeuvre, Cecil was still more astonished at seeing nothing even to warrant the movement, and, while wondering what they were creeping on, was terrified to see the whole half-dozen spring up the beach and surround him.

"Ah! ah!" laughed the foremost—an officer by his stripes and mark—"caught like a bird in a trap, my fine fellow. 'Pon my soul, the neatest thing I ever did!"

And he looked round for the echoing laughter that was expected and came.

Cecil stared from one to the other breathless with amazement and alarm.

"What do you mean—what have I done?" he asked, brokenly.

Another roar of laughter greeted the question.

"Come, that's a good 'un," returned the boatswain. "Well, I reckon you haven't done anything yet, but you'll have to when you gets aboard the 'Polly,' my fine fellow."

And he grasped Cecil's arm.

"Aboard!" repeated the youth, pulling his arm. "Why should I go aboard—what right have you to surround me and talk like this—what right?"

"Come—come, that's enough," retorted the boatswain of the "Polly," rather roughly. "'Tis all o' no use, my lad; we're the p'rogong—short o' hands and we're taking 'em where we can get 'em for the home voyage."

Cecil, seeing it all at a glance, uttered a despairing cry and made a rush for liberty.

The men threw themselves upon him and commenced dragging him towards the boat, laughing at his cries of despair and entreaty.

At that moment Laurence returned, and halting for one moment to stare with amazement as if scarcely crediting his eyes, the next bore down upon them with pistol upraised like an avenging angel.

"Laury! Laury!" shrieked Cecil, in an agony of delight and terror.

Laurence shouted like a mad bull.

"Look out!" shrieked the boatswain. "Seize the bridle, knock him over; I'll manage the lad!"

The five sailors, obeying his orders, threw themselves upon the enraged Laurence; one fell beneath the Black's hoofs, another was levelled by a murderous blow from the butt end of the pistol, but the third with a sea-going oath drew his dagger and inflicted a wild but effective blow upon the rescuer's shoulder.

Poor Laury's pistol dropped from his hand, and with a reel he fell headlong from the saddle.

The three men then helped the two wounded ones to their feet and hurried after their chief, who had just lifted Cecil into the boat.

One cry went up from the youth awful enough to wake the dead.

It did wake the sweating Laury, who with one great effort raised his bleeding form from the ground, stretched out his hands, with an answering cry and then fell back as one dead.

So they were parted.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Alas! that love, so gentle in its view  
Should be so tyrannous and rough in use;

Shakespeare.

CAPTAIN DARTMOUTH'S town house was completed and was the talk of Ton.

No palace could be more elaborately splendid or extravagantly magnificent, save perhaps that of the Countess Vitzarelli.

The Dale was in the upholsterer's hands and would be completed in a few weeks.

There was to be a grand house-warming when all was finished and with a duchess to give it éclat and acceptations from the crème de la crème of society a great success was expected.

Meanwhile Captain Dartmouth's great wealth was displayed in the matters of equipages, positions in crimson, armies of claret-colored stickies crowding and fluttering about the house in Park Lane, magnificent dinner parties for the ladies, choice suppers for the gentlemen's delectation, and various other recognized ways.

People whispered strange stories behind their hand of the captain's wealth, and as an addendum hinted that it might soon be augmented by the coffers of Vitzarelli.

But it was only hinted at, none dared speak out what all looked forward to as a certainty, the betrothal of the beautiful countess to the wealthy and popular captain.

At all his grand dinners the white-haired count and the lovely Lucille were to be met, and very few evenings were held at Carnarvon House without Captain Dartmouth's presence.

But to all he was still a dark, unsolved enigma. The smile, which had been so rare in the olden times, when debts and duns disturbed his idle existence, was to be seen more frequently now, but with a hidden meaning and purpose behind it that robbed it of all openness and left the person smiled on with the uneasy feeling of having been under the skillful glance of a mental surgeon, for the dark, piercing eyes seemed ever prying and forcing their way into men's breasts and ever on the watch and guard lest a something dark and impalpable, yet ever present, should suddenly turn up to thwart his purpose or reveal the secret which lay hidden behind the smooth, serene and impassable face.

It was only natural that the count, being so great an acquaintance of Captain Dartmouth, should introduce some of his Italian friends, but it was rather strange, some gossips added, that the captain should hold so many supper parties at which Italians only were present and after which play was allowed and allowed to run high.

At least play was the only excuse which the gossip-mongers could think of for the secrecy betokened in a close-locked room with doubled doors and windows.



However this might be, whatever mystery hovered round the captain's name, served only to make him more popular, and in the excitement of a princely entertainment at the Park Lane house the fashionable world forgot to notice or mark that the Italian rebels had been furnished with great quantities of arms, and that an attempt, very nearly successful, had been made to take the principal border fortress.

Or if noticed at all no one thought of connecting the circumstance with the fêtes and dinners of Captain Dartmouth or the Italian supporters and gambling parties.

And now let us make our way into the presence of the powerful captain.

In the south wing of the Park Lane palace was a small room furnished with burl, hung with purple velvet and enshrining a few valuable pictures and costly nicknacks.

This was the private apartment of the captain.

Here he opened and answered any letters he designed to notice.

Here his steward, an aristocratic gentleman, with an enormous salary, obtained the interviews and received the orders which kept the captain's country estate flourishing and paying.

Here too, within the iron safes and upon the ornate bureau lay the outline schemes for farther wealth and aggrandisement which the captain thirsted for.

No one was permitted to enter this room save its master, no hand allowed to touch, no other eye permitted to rest upon the precious documents and plans. All here was sacred to the subtle brain which had won so much already and was plotting for still more.

As the summer sun penetrated the chinks of the black velvet curtains and threw the pattern of the lace screens upon the thick Turkey carpet, it showed up the handsome face of the man to advantage. The white forehead was perhaps a little more wrinkled and the mouth a trifle sterner and impassable than when we first saw them in the smoking-room of the Hermite, but the wrinkles and the hard curve of the lips may have been produced by the tidings he was gleaming from the note within his hand and not by time and its remorse.

"Idiot!" he exclaimed, letting the note fall from his long, white hands upon the mass of papers already lying on the desk, rising as he spoke to pace the room. "Idiot! How could they fail? There is some knavery here. The money was sent—a precious five thousand—the arms were delivered, I saw the receipt myself! They should have taken the confounded place or perished. All wasted, wasted!" and he ground his teeth. "Not that I care! Italy is no more to me than the Canibal Islands, and the miserable Idiots who boast it much less, but—oh, but—what will that white-haired plotter say, and what will she think of the failure of the scheme upon the success of which I had pledged myself? She, Lucille, oh, Heaven, that I could free myself from the charms she throws around me. Lucille! Beautiful, glorious Lucille! I love thee, I love thee, and must win thee if all the Dole gold I have so handsomely gained should be the price!"

Here he paused for a few minutes, and sinking into his chair covered his face with his hands, then continued, in a softer tone:

"Gold! am I not giving more than gold? What and where will all this plotting and conspiracy end? We are playing with edged tools which at any moment may turn in our hands and cut our own throats. Italy! Freedom! Bah! it is treason, dark and dangerous treason which may smother all of us—me in particular. But then—Lucille! Ah, she is worth all danger, all risk. I must, I will possess her. No matter what the means, no matter how dangerous, how deadly, she must be mine. Once mine and then farewell to all secret societies and conspiracies. Good-bye to the white-haired old idiot, his Italy, his freedom and the rest of it. Once mine I will turn like a rat and point out their nest-hole."

At that moment came a gentle, hesitating rap at the door, and almost before he could dispel the furtive look upon his face the curtains swung aside and the Count Vitzarelli entered.

Reginald Dartmouth had risen with a dark frown to confront the intruder, but it changed into a smile as he saw who it was, and, folding out his hand, he said, in his soft and languid voice:

"Ah, count, an early and unexpected visitor; pray be seated."

The count seemed agitated and excited, and, dropping into a chair, wiped his high forehead with a trembling hand.

"Yes, I am early, my dear Dartmouth—pardon my intrusion here, I had knocked twice, but getting no answer ventured to turn the handle. My dear Dartmouth, you have heard the news, the confounded disastrous tidings of the defeat?"

Reginald Dartmouth smiled.

"Yes," he said, coolly. "Here is the despatch."

And he held up the letter which had roused his anger.

The count stretched out his hand and took it eagerly.

"Oh," he said, "it is written in cipher; how is it you got it so quickly? I sent out a special messenger and have only heard the tidings by this mail, this I see came last night."

"I sent a gadet to wait outside the town and bring me word immediately," said Reginald Dartmouth, with a quiet smile of power.

The count sighed.

"Ah, you're always wonderful, always, my dear Dartmouth. Well, you see the thing has failed. Failed! Our men are killed and prisoners."

"And my money and arms thrown away," said Reginald Dartmouth, with an irritating softness.

"Ay, ay!" returned the count, looking distressed. "It's the last two items which caused me the deepest regret, Dartmouth. You have lost so much in the cause, and—well, I must do my task bravely, we are compelled to ask you to venture so much more."

Reginald Dartmouth raised his eyebrows and glanced keenly at the Italian conspirator's face, but, instead of the remonstrance or refusal which the count seemed to dread, said, quietly:

"How much, and what do you require of me this time, my dear count?"

Count Vitzarelli seemed taken aback by the cool tone of submission, and, with a certain hesitation, said:

"This failure of our scheme has entailed serious expenses. Fresh men, fresh arms, money to ransom and free the prisoners, and the other consequent claims, will necessitate an expenditure of fifty thousand, of which ten thousand must be immediately produced."

Reginald Dartmouth's face never changed a muscle. He looked the Italian conspirator in the eyes with the same quiet, meditative expression until he had finished; then he rose, and, walking to a small cabinet, unlocked a drawer and took therefrom a small gift-bound book.

"Count," he said, reseating himself, with his white finger between the pages, "Count Vitzarelli, let me ask your attention for a moment, while I run over a few facts and figures for your consideration. You ask me for ten thousand pounds. Before I give them let me remind you of your past demands and my past gifts. Three months ago I joined—you need not fear," he broke off as the count glanced towards the curtain with a nervous apprehension. "The room is sound, tight, and no one can hear the slightest murmur. To proceed, three months ago I became a member of the secret society of which you are the illustrious and noble chief."

The count nodded, and after waiting a moment Reginald Dartmouth went on, keeping his eyes fixed upon the listener's face:

"Your purpose—"

"Say, our, my dear Dartmouth," interposed the count, softly, but with a significant smile.

"Our purpose then, if you prefer it, my dear count," said Reginald Dartmouth, with a peculiar glitter of the eyes, "our purpose is the liberation of the Italian states from their present bondage. This purpose is to be attained by legal, illegal or indeed by any means. To this purpose we have consecrated villainy of every kind, forgery, murder—"

"Hush! hush!" exclaimed the count, turning pale and rising with an alarmed countenance.

Reginald Dartmouth smiled evilly behind the hand raised to stroke his moustache, and in exactly the same tone, and with a malicious twinkle in his keen eagle eyes, resumed:

"Let me assure you, once more, that we are in no danger from eaves-droppers. This room is constructed—at an enormous expense—to be entirely sound-proof. Were an assassin's hand at your throat and your shrieks rose fast and thick from your dying lips, not one of them could penetrate the barrier of those curtains and the subtly contrived walls behind them."

The count shuddered.

"Well, well, my dear captain, but still may I venture to suggest that some less offensive, less repulsive words—"

"Bah," retorted Reginald Dartmouth, with a polite smile. "You shall choose your own terms wherewith to designate the poisoning of the Italian ambassador and the stabbing of the Ducal minister in the ante-chamber of the palace, I call both deeds murder, and let me add, our judges would punish them as such. But to go on," he continued, after waiting to watch with a fierce enjoyment the fleeting expression of anger and fear that his words caused upon the count's face. "Our purpose is to be advanced by legal or illegal means. We have all pledged ourselves to aid the rebels and unseat the present Italian government. Our money, our talents,

our lives, must be vested and spent, if need be, in our sacred cause. All for Italy and Freedom!"

The deep sarcasm with which he pronounced the last words brought a flush of crimson to the listener's face, and he started to his feet, but before he could give utterance to his indignation or other passions that filled him the soft voice went on:

"I am not an Italian, count, but an Englishman, and a man of the world, and though I understand and your enthusiasm I cannot be expected to share it. Now you are an Italian, and, being such, can be satisfied with your patriotism as a reason for such rebellious conspiracy and life-risking. But you are also a man of the world and should know—say, must know—that I, who am not an Italian, must needs have some other motive than patriotism for spending my money and risking my life."

As he finished the Italian's face went pale and his lips trembled with a commingling of fear and passion.

He had been deceived—he, the clever man of the world, the genius of Italy—by a captain of dragoons. But with a great effort he controlled his passion, and with as good an imitation as he could, produce of the captain's quiet and easy smile said:

"Grant all you say, my dear Dartmouth, and what follows but to ask you to divulge the motive that prompted you to give us your valuable aid?"

"Valuable aid," repeated Reginald Dartmouth, thoughtfully. "Yes, yes, count, you may say that truthfully. Let me see." Here he glanced at the book which he had in his hand. "Here are set down the sums I have handed to the secret council for the furtherance of their designs. Glance at them, my dear count, and tell me if I am correct in stating the amount at twenty thousand pounds."

The Italian took the book with trembling fingers and nodded.

"It is a large amount, my dear Dartmouth, I admit."

"And you ask for ten thousand more immediately, with a prospect of still farther calls—"

"Loans, loans, my dear Dartmouth, say loans; all will be repaid—"

"When the Count Vitzarelli enters Rome as conqueror, or rather dictator of Italy!" broke in Reginald Dartmouth, coldly.

The count's face lit up.

"Yes, yes," he said. "And that, pray Heaven, may not be long—"

"Or it may," said Reginald Dartmouth. "There is a chance you see, my dear count, a very risky chance. Now we Englishmen, shop-keepers as we are, require some security for our money. Show me if you can what shadow of security I possess that Italy will be Count Vitzarelli's and that my money will be mine again."

The count shrugged his shoulders.

"What farther information can I give you than you already possess, my dear Dartmouth?"

Reginald Dartmouth smiled subtly.

None, he knew.

"So," he resumed, this time more slowly, and, if possible, more softly. "And, further, my dear count, I speak now as a man of the world to a man of the world—what security do I possess that, supposing Italy the count's, that all I have staked will be returned to me?"

The question was a direct insult, and the high-born count sprang to his feet with all his Italian passion blazing in his face.

"Sir," he exclaimed. "This insult—"

"Nay," said the captain. "An insult cannot be where none is intended. Sit down, count, I pray. I spoke as a man of the world. In business to ask a man for security is not to insult him. When money changes hands business must be dragged in and security must be given."

He had the Italian in his toils, and the Italian knew it. With a gulp as if to swallow the insult and explanation together, he sank into the chair again.

"What security do you wish, my dear Dartmouth? Name some, point it out to me and I will pledge myself to give it you."

Reginald Dartmouth fixed a penetrating glance upon the mobile face of the count, and then with all his languid grace rose and placed a silver flagon of rare wine, and two goblets that had come from the Persian court, and were worth a small fortune, upon the table.

"Let us drink," he said. "Talking is thirsty as well as disagreeable work."

And he filled the goblets.

They clicked them together after the Italian fashion, and drank, the count, as if half fearful of treachery, waiting first until he saw the cup at Reginald Dartmouth's lips.

"You ask me to name some security, count," continued the captain, reseating himself and leaning back with a negligent air of ease, but with his penetrating eyes fixed upon the other's face.

"Yes, yes, show me something I can give you and it is yours," replied the Italian, eagerly.

Reginald Dartmouth leaned forward, clasping his white hands upon the desk before him.

"Count," he said, with slow impressiveness, "I am an Englishman and without an Italian's enthusiasm for the cause. Make me an Italian and part and parcel of it. Give me an interest, life-long and absorbing in the cause—"

"Make you an Italian? How?" said the count.

"By marriage," replied Reginald Dartmouth, with a piercing glance. "By marriage. Give me a daughter of Italy for a wife—one who has a share in the cause, and so make me by that most powerful of all motives, self interest, an enthusiast and a devotee."

The count brightened up.

"If that is the security you ask, my dear Dartmouth, and it can be obtained by my power it is yours. Nay, it is a security as much for Italy as for yourself."

"Just so—for both sides. You agree, count?"

"Most heartily," replied the Italian.

"Then nothing more remains than to draw you the cheque for ten thousand pounds, and give you a promise for another like sum, say in a month from this date."

And he opened his cheque book upon the desk.

"Yes, one thing more," interposed the unsuspecting count, "and that is to name your bride."

Reginald Dartmouth smiled strangely.

"Is that a condition? Are there any saving clauses to your agreement, my dear count? I ask for an Italian bride, one who has a share in our cause—do you wish me to name her?"

The count, troubled by the smiling scrutiny of the dark eyes, shifted on his seat.

"Is it possible for me to bind myself to the fulfilment of a half-expressed agreement?" he asked. "Name the bride you ask. Is it the Signora Estelle, Madame Pauline?"

Reginald Dartmouth shook his head with a gesture almost of contempt.

"No, count," he replied, rising as he spoke. "I ask for one to whom I have already given my heart, I ask for one who will give me a greater stake in the cause than even self interest. Give me the woman I love and I am yours, count, till death."

"Her name—her name!" said the count, excitedly.

"Lucille Vitzarelli," replied Reginald Dartmouth, with impressive distinctness.

The count sprang to his feet with an exclamation upon his lips and a host of varied emotions fleeting across his face, pride not being the least.

"Lucille?" he exclaimed, when the breath, driven from him by the sudden announcement, had returned sufficiently to allow of his speaking. "Lucille—my niece, the Countess Vitzarelli?"

"The same," returned Reginald Dartmouth, with the same cool sangfroid.

"But," breathed the count, sinking into the chair again and looking up into the immovable face with a troubled and hesitating glance, "but—are you aware, do you remember—"

Then, disliking to give utterance to his thoughts, he stopped.

"You pause, count, in your gentle reminder of the respective stations of the suitor and the lady. You would have me remember that I am plain Captain Dartmouth, of good family and decent blood perhaps, but still unentitled and undecorated, and that your niece is of pure blue blood, Countess of Vitzarelli, and an Italian princess. The reminder is unnecessary inasmuch as I have never for one moment allowed myself to forget it."

And he smiled the subtle smile of power which had several times already irritated the Italian.

"I have never forgotten it, count, and I never shall. I pray you do not forget that we of England think as much of our old Norman blood as you of your kingly descent, and that with us titles go for nothing weighed against wealth and power. Both of these are mine. Your presence here—this small book proves it. These I offer you, unlimited and unstinted, for the hand of your niece, Lucille, Countess Vitzarelli."

The count rose and paced the room.

"I, Captain Dartmouth—I will not sell Lucille even for Italy. I cannot. Ask me all else, even my life, and I give it you willingly. But this—this is impossible."

And with a gesture of the hand, as if pushing the obnoxious proposal from him, he sank into the chair again.

Reginald Dartmouth eyed him with intense and cool enjoyment.

"You use harsh words, almost as harsh and more unnecessary than those you condemned in me a while ago. I asked you not to sell your niece—nay, less, I asked you to give her to me, when I should have said 'your consent' only."

The count brightened up.

"My consent," he said. "That is another matter."

"Just so," said Reginald Dartmouth, "and you will give that, ay, and readily, because you feel within your heart perfectly assured that Lucille"—the old man turned at the other's friendly use of the name—"will never give her. No excuses, I implore," he added, as the count, with a tell-tale flush, was about to speak. "We are men of the world, my dear count, and your sharpness—I may use the word, I hope, without offence—does you credit, and does not offend me. You give your consent to my espousal to your niece, Lucille, if I can obtain her?"

"Yes! I do," said the count.

"Good," said Dartmouth. "And now, still in the character of men of the world, let me in due form get your illustrious name to the promise."

And before the count could speak he drew a parchment from a drawer, and, with the rapidity of a notary, drew up an agreement to that effect.

"Now," said he, with a smile, "sign, count, while I draw out your cheque and give you a formal promise of a farther supply."

The count approached the table and took up a pen.

But as if his courage wanted some stimulant ere he could sign away his beautiful niece's hand he caught up the goblet at his elbow, drained it at a draught and hastily wrote his name at the bottom of the document.

Reginald Dartmouth took it and, sending it carefully, handed the cheque with the words:

"Exchange, my dear count, is no robbery. There is money for money's worth, with more to come."

The count took the cheque, and hastily thrust it into his pocket, as if the very touch of it were a contamination, then, rather pale and agitated, said, with a glance at the table:

"I will delay you no longer, my dear Dartmouth. We meet to-night at the usual rendezvous?"

Reginald Dartmouth shook his head with a smile.

"I start for my Dale estate to-night, where I am to prepare for your and the countess's visit, my lord."

And with a bow that had as much of mockery in it as respect he summoned a servant to show the illustrious visitor out.

(To be continued.)

## SCIENCE.

**DISCOVERY IN ELECTRICITY.**—Mr. Willoughby Smith, the electrician to the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company, has made a remarkable discovery. He finds that if a bar of selenium placed in the dark has a current of electricity passed through it, and be then subjected to the influence of light, either daylight or artificial light, its power of conducting electricity is immediately doubled, this result ceasing the moment the light is withdrawn. It is proved that this effect is entirely due to the luminous rays, and in no way due to the effect of heat.

**THE WOOLWICH ANVIL.**—The great iron plate, weighing 107 tons, on which the anvil-block of the 35-ton Nasmyth steam hammer will rest, in the new rolling-mills at the Royal Gun Factories, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, has been laid in its place. The operation was one requiring considerable skill, and was watched with great interest, as the plate had to be turned completely over. Owing to its enormous size—about 22 ft. square—it had to be cast in an open mould, and in order to obtain certain necessary projections on its upper surface, that side had to be cast downwards, the upper surface of an open casting being necessarily flat, an arrangement by which the advantage was also secured of having the best of the metal on the upper side. A gang of workmen, under the direction of Mr. R. Meken, turned it over by means of powerful hydraulic jacks and strong tackle, and after tilting it into an upright position, it was gradually lowered into the position it is to occupy in future. The anvil-block, a mass of iron weighing 198 tons, has now to be mounted upon it. The ingenious contrivances and expedients by which these masses of metal were moved about and turned have excited the admiration of many professional and scientific men assembled to witness the operations.

**THE PROCESS OF EMBALMING.**—The Brunetti process for the preservation of the dead, remarks a medical contemporary, has recently been published; it consists of several processes:—1. The circulatory system is cleared thoroughly out by washing with cold water till it issues quite clear from the body. This may occupy two to five hours. 2. Alcohol is injected so as to abstract as much water as possible. This occupies about a quarter of an hour. 3. Ether is then injected to abstract the fatty matters. This occupies two to ten hours. 4. A strong solution of tannin is then injected.

This occupies for imbibition two to ten hours. 5. The body is then dried in a current of warm air passed over heated chloride of calcium. This may occupy two to five hours. The body is then perfectly preserved and resists decay. The Italians exhibit specimens which are as hard as stone and retain the shape perfectly, and equal to the best wax models. A more simple form of injection suited for anatomical purposes consists of glycerine, 14 parts; soft sugar, 2 parts; nitrate of potash, 1 part. It is found that after saturation for some days in this solution the parts become comparatively indestructible and change neither in size nor figure.

**PHOTOGRAPHIC GHOSTS.**—A good many plans have been suggested for producing photographic ghosts, but I have not seen mentioned a plan which I tried last year, and which could be made use of without any suspicion on the part of the sitter, and may have been used by those who have professed to take spirit photographs. The only apparatus necessary is a reflector, such as is used for reversing negatives, but, instead of silvered, made of plain glass, and fitted in the same way on to the lens. By a lengthening of the hood of the lens this would not be noticed. Next is the arrangement of the studio. At the right or left of the position in which the camera stands should be a broad door, hung with dark curtains, and opening into another room where the spirits keep in readiness. A screen or anything else may hide this from the sitter when in place; at other times it is merely a passage into another room. We are now ready to operate; the sitter is in position, and no one but himself and the operator in the room. While focussing, by a signal—a cough or anything else—the spirit, as I may call him or her, parts the curtains, and stands in front of them. The operator goes on with his focussing not only his sitter, but his spirit as well—the latter, of course, by preconcerted signals: he may examine his sitter from the right side of the camera or from the left; this will tell his spiritual assistant to move a little to the right or left, and so on till a good combination of both sitter and ghost are shown on the ground glass. The picture is taken, the sitter is developed, and also the spirit, the latter, who is in a weaker light, to a less degree, and so the spirit photograph is produced. Immediately the cap is closed, of course the spirit decamps, and the sitter has no knowledge of it. He may then, if of a doubtful nature, follow the photographer into the dark room, and see the picture developed. It would be advisable to have the spirit a little in advance of the sitter as regards distance from the lens, as I think that the great fault with those produced by the Stereoscopic Company is their being too much in focus.—W. B. W.

**STEAM LOCOMOTION ON COMMON ROADS.**—At the meeting of the Institution of Civil Engineers on Tuesday, the 8th of April, an interesting communication was read by Mr. John Head, of Ipswich, on "The Rise and Progress of Steam Locomotion on Common Roads." Although Mr. Head deemed the carriage of passengers on common roads a hopeless task, he was of opinion that in a very short time we should use steam power on our tramways, where engineers would not have to encounter the same difficulties as they had hitherto experienced, and he illustrated his views by a description of a tramway locomotive, designed by Mr. Leonard J. Todd, of Leith. A description followed of the Aveling and Gulleratt systems of steam road rolling, the former usually employed in England, and the latter in France, and statistics were given which demonstrated the advantages which steam power has over animal power in making and repairing macadamized roads. The various agricultural locomotives now in use were described in detail, as well as Messrs. John Fowler and Co.'s ploughing and traction engine, and some information was given respecting the great increase in the use of steam power for the requirements of agriculture. The paper concluded with a dissertation upon the employment of road locomotives for military purposes. The author showed that the engine could be used for hauling waggons or guns, either by coupling direct when the roads were good, or by means of a wire rope when the inclines were very steep, or the guns were required to be taken over soft places; also that it could be made into a stationary machine, and adapted for sawing wood for siege purposes or pumping water; and, lastly, the ordinary wheels could be taken off and flanged wheels substituted, by which means the engine could be employed on the ordinary railways in case the enemy had secured all his rolling stock. Mr. Aveling had designed an admirable engine for military purposes, and several of them were in constant use by the engineer department at Chatham and elsewhere. Some of Messrs. Fowler's traction engines were also used in the late Franco-German war by the Prussians. The paper was illustrated by a number of excellent drawings and models.





## DAISY THORNTON.

## CHAPTER I.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediment. *Shakespeare.*

ELMWOOD, June 15th, 18—.

I HAVE been out among my flowers all the morning, digging, weeding, and transplanting, and then stopping a little to rest.

Perfect successes my roses are this year, while my white lilies are the wonder of the town, and yet my heart was not with them to-day, and it was nothing to me that those fine people staying at the Towers came into the grounds while I was at work, "just to see and admire," they said, adding that there was no place like Elmwood in all the town.

I know that, and Guy and I have been so happy here, and I loved him so much, and never dreamed what was in store for me, until it came so suddenly and seemed like a heavy blow.

Why did he want to get married when he has lived to be thirty years old, without a care of any kind, and with money enough to allow him to indulge his taste for books, and pictures, and travel, and is respected by everybody, looked up to as the first man in the town, and petted and cared for by me as few brothers have ever been petted and cared for; why, I say, did he want a change, and, if he must be married, why need he take a child of sixteen, whom he has only known since Christmas, and whose sole recommendation, so far as I can learn, is her pretty face?

Daisy McDonald is her name, and her father is a poor lawyer. Guy met her last autumn at Brighton, and fell in love at once, and made two or three journeys on "important business," he said, and then, some time in May, told me he was going to bring me a sister, the sweetest little creature, with such beautiful blue eyes and wonderful hair.

I was sure to love her, he said, and when I suggested that she was very young he replied that her youth was in her favour, as we could more easily mould her to the Thornton pattern.

Little he knows about girls, but then he was perfectly infatuated and blind to everything but Daisy's eyes, and hair, and voice, which is so sweet and winning that it will speak for her at once, and he asked me to see to the furnishing of the rooms on the west side of the house, the two which communicate with his own private library, where he spends a great deal of time with his books and writing.

The room adjoining this he would have for Daisy's boudoir or parlour, where she could sit when he was occupied, and she wished to be near him.

## [THE BAD NEWS.]

This he would have fitted up in blue, as she had expressed a wish to that effect, and he said no expense must be spared to make it as pretty and attractive as possible.

So the walls were frescoed and tinted, and I spent two entire days in London hunting for a carpet of the desirable shape, which should be right both in texture and design.

Guy was exceedingly particular, and developed a wonderful proclivity to find fault with everything I admired.

Nothing was quite the thing for Daisy until at last a manufacturer offered to get one up which should suit, and so the carpet question was happily ended for the time being.

Then came the furniture, and unlimited orders were given to the upholsterer to do his best, and matters were progressing finely when order number two came from the little lady, who was sorry to seem so fickle, but mamma, whose taste was perfect, had decided against all blue, and would Guy please furnish the room with drab trimmed with blue?

"It must be a very delicate shade of drab," she wrote, and lest he should get too intense an idea she would call it a tint of a shade of drab, or, better yet, a hint of a tint of a shade of drab would describe exactly what she meant, and be so entirely unique, and lovely, and recherché.

Guy never swears, and never uses slang of any kind, but this was a little too much, and with a most careful expression of countenance he asked me what the deuce I supposed a hint of a tint of a shade of drab could be?

I could not enlighten him, and we finally concluded to leave it to the upholsterer, to whom Guy telegraphed in hot haste, bidding him to get the desired shade—a faded, washed-out colour, which seemed a cross between wood-ashes and pale skim milk. A sample was sent up for Guy's approval, and then the work commenced again, when order number three came in one of those dainty little billets which used to make Guy's face radiant with happiness. Daisy had changed her mind again and gone back to the blue, which she always preferred as most becoming to her complexion.

Guy did not say a single word, but he took the next train to London, and stayed there till the furniture was done and packed. As I did not know where he was stopping, I could not forward him two little missives which came during his absence. I suspect he had a design in keeping his hotel from me, and whether Daisy changed her mind again or not I never knew.

The furniture reached Elmwood the day but one

before Guy started for his bride, and Julia Hamilton, who was then at the Towers, helped me arrange the room, which is a perfect little gem and cannot fail to please, I am sure. I wonder Guy never fancied Julia Hamilton. Oh, if he only had done so, I should not have as many misgivings as I now have, nor dread the future so much. Julia is sensible and twenty years old, and lives in Bristol, and comes of a good family, and is every way suitable—but when did a man ever choose the woman whom his sister thought suitable for him? And Guy is like other men, and this is his wedding-day; and after a trip to the Continent they are coming home, and I am to give a grand reception, and then subside, I suppose, into the position of the "old maid sister who will be dreadfully in the way."

September 15th, 18—.

Just three months since I opened my journal, and, on glancing over what I wrote on Guy's wedding-day, I find that in one respect at least I was unjust to the little creature who is now my sister, and calls me Miss Frances. Not by a word or look has she shown the least inclination to assume the position of mistress of the house, nor does she seem to think me at all in the way; but that she considers me quite an antediluvian I am certain, for in speaking of something which happened in 1820 she asked if I remembered it! And I only three years older than Guy! But then she once called him a dear old grandfatherly man, and thought it a good joke that on their wedding tour she was mistaken for his daughter. She looks so young—not sixteen even; but with those childish blue eyes, and that innocent, pleading kind of expression, she never can be old. She is very beautiful, and I can understand in part Guy's infatuation, though at times he hardly knows what to do with his pretty plaything.

It was the middle of August when they came from their tour, sorely against her wishes. Everybody flattered her, and one evening, when at a ball, she received twenty bouquets from as many different admirers, each of whom asked her hand for the first dance. They had ascertained that Guy was not a disciple of Terpsichore, though I understand he did try some of the square dances—with poor success, I imagine, for Lucy Porter laughed when she told me of it; and I do not wonder, for my grave, scholarly Guy must be as much out of place in a ball-room as his little, airy, doll of a wife is in her place when there. I can understand just how she enjoyed it all, and how she hated to come home, for she did not then know the kind of home she was coming to.

It was glorious weather, and a rain of the previous day had washed all the flowers and

shrubs, and freshened up the grass on the lawn, which was just like a piece of velvet, while everything around Elmwood seemed to laugh in the warm afternoon sunshine as the carriage came up to the door. Eight trunks, two hat boxes, and a guitar-case had come in the morning, and were waiting the arrival of their owner, whose face looked eagerly out at the house and its surroundings, and it seemed to me did not light up as much as it should have done under the circumstances.

"Why, Guy, I always thought the house was stone," I heard her say, as the carriage door was opened by the coachman.

"No, darling—brick. Ah, there's Fan," was Guy's reply, and the next moment I had her in my arms.

Yes, literally in my arms. She is such a wee little thing, and her face is so sweet, and her eyes so childish and wistful and her voice so musical and flute-like that before I knew what I was doing I lifted her from her feet and hugged her hard, and said I meant to love her, first for Guy's sake and then for her own. Was it my fancy, I wonder, or did she really shrink back a little and put up her hands to arrange the bows and streamers and curls floating away from her like the flags on a vessel on some gala day?

She was very tired, Guy said, and ought to lie down before dinner. Would I show her to her room with Zillah, her maid? Then for the first time I noticed a dark-haired girl who had alighted from the carriage and stood holding Daisy's travelling-bag and wraps.

"Her waiting-maid," Guy explained, when we were alone. "She is so hopeless, and wanted one badly, that I concluded to humour her for a time, especially as I had not the most remote idea how to pin on those wonderful things which she wears. It is astonishing how many things it takes to make up the tout-ensemble of a fashionable woman," Guy said, and I thought he glanced a little curiously at my plain cambric wrapper and smooth hair.

Indeed he has taken it upon himself to criticize me somewhat; thinks I am too slim, as he expresses it, and that my head might be improved if it had a more suarly appearance. Daisy, of course, stands for his model, and her hair does not look as if it had been combed in a month, and yet Zillah spends hours over it. She—that is, Daisy—was pleased with her boudoir, and gave vent to sundry exclamations of delight when she entered it and skipped around like the child she is, and said she was so glad it was blue instead of that indescribable drab, and that room is almost the only thing she has expressed an opinion about since she has been here. She does not talk much except to Zillah, and then in French, which I do not understand. If I were to write just what I think I should say that she had expected a great deal more grandeur than she finds. At all events she takes the things which I think very nice and even elegant as a matter of course, and if we were to set up a style of living equal to that of the queen's household I do believe she would act as if she had been accustomed to it all her life, or, at least, that it was what she had a right to expect. I know she imagines Guy a great deal richer than he is, and that reminds me of something which troubles me.

Guy has given his name to Dick Trevelyan for one thousand pounds. To be sure it is only for three months, and Dick is worth three times that amount, and an old friend and every way reliable and honest. And still I did not want Guy to sign.

I wonder why it is that women will always jump at a conclusion without any apparent reason?

Of course I could not explain it, but when Guy told me what he was going to do I felt in an instant as if he would have it all to pay and told him so, but he only laughed at me and called me nervous and fidgety, and said a friend was good for nothing if he could not lend a helping hand occasionally.

Perhaps that is true, but I was uneasy and shall be glad when the time is up and the paper cancelled.

Our expenses since Daisy came are double what they were before, and if we were to lose one thousand pounds now we should be badly off. Daisy is a luxury Guy has to pay for, but he pays willingly and seems to grow more and more infatuated every day.

"She is so sweet tempered and affectionate," he says, and I admit to myself that she is sweet tempered, and that nothing ruffles her, but about the affectionate part I am not so certain.

Guy would pet her and caress her continually if she would let him, but she won't.

"Oh, please don't touch me. It is too warm, and you crumple my dress," I have heard her say more than once when he came in and tried to put his arm about her or take her in his lap.

Indeed, her dress seems to be uppermost in her mind, and I have known her to try on half a dozen different ones before she could decide in which she looked the best.

No matter what Guy is doing, or how deeply he is absorbed in his studies, she makes him stop and inspect her from all points, and give his opinion, and Guy submits in a way perfectly wonderful to me who never dared to disturb him when shut up with his books.

Another thing, too, he submits to which astonishes me more than anything else. It used to annoy him terribly to wait for anything or anybody. He was always ready and expected others to be, but Daisy is just the reverse. Such dawdling habits I never saw in any person.

With Zillah to help her dress she is never ready for breakfast, never ready for dinner, never ready for church, never ready for anything, and that in a household accustomed to order and regularity does put things back so and make so much trouble.

"Don't wait breakfast for me, please," she says when she has been called for the third or fourth time, and if she can get us to sit down without her she seems to think it all right, and that she can dawdle as much as she likes.

I wonder that it never occurs to her that to keep the breakfast table round, as we must, makes the girls cross and upsets the kitchen generally. I hinted as much to her once when the table stood till ten o'clock, and she only opened her great blue eyes wonderingly, and said mamma had spoiled her, but she would try and do better, and she bade Zillah call her at five the next morning, and Zillah called her, and then she was a half-hour late. Guy doesn't like that, and he looked daggers on the night of the reception, when the guests began to arrive before she was dressed, and she commenced her toilet too at three o'clock! But she was wondrously beautiful in her bridal robes, and took all hearts by storm. She is perfectly at home in society, and knows just what to do and say so long as the conversation keeps in the fashionable round of chit-chat, but when it drifts into deeper channels she is silent at once, or only answers in monosyllables. I believe she is a good French scholar, and she plays and sings tolerably well and reads the novels as they come out, but of books and literature in general she is wholly ignorant, and if Guy thought to find in her any sympathy with his favourite studies and authors he is terribly mistaken.

And yet, as I write this, my conscience gives me sundry little pricks as if I were wronging her, for in spite of her faults I like her, and like to watch her fitting through the house and grounds like the little fairy she is, and I hope the marriage may turn out well, and that she will improve with age, and not continue to make such heavy drafts on my brother's purse.

## CHAPTER II.

Off expectation falls, and most oft there  
Where most it promises. *Shakespeare.*

September 20th, 18—.

THREE months married. Three months with Daisy all to myself, and yet not exactly to myself either, for except I go after her I confess she does not often come to me, unless it is just as I have shut myself up in my room, thinking to have a quiet hour with my books. Then she generally appears, and wants me to ride with her, or play croquet, or see which dress is most becoming, and I always submit and obey her as if I were the child instead of herself.

She is young, and I almost wonder her mother allowed her to marry. Fan hints that they were mercenary, but if they were they concealed the fact wonderfully well, and made me think it a great sacrifice on their part to give me Daisy. And so it was; such a lovely little darling, and so beautiful. What a sensation she created on the Continent, and still I was glad to get away, for I did not like some things which were done there. I did not like so many young men around her, nor her dancing those abominable dances which she seemed to enjoy so much. "Square dances were poky," she said, even after I tried them with her for the sake of keeping her out of that vile John Britton's society. I have a fancy that I made a spectacle of myself, hopping about like a magpie, but Daisy said, "I did beautifully," though she cried because I put my foot on her lace flounce and tore it, and I noticed she ever after had some good reason why I should not dance again. "It was too hard work for me; I was too big," she said, "and would tire easily; Cousin Tom was big, and he never danced."

By the way, I have some little curiosity with regard to that Cousin Tom who wanted Daisy so badly and who, because she refused him, went to New Zealand. I trust he will stay there. Not that I am or could be jealous of Daisy, but it is better for cousins like Tom to keep away.

Daisy is very happy here, though she is not quite so enthusiastic over the place as I supposed she would be, knowing how she lived at home. Will

enough, it is true, and the McDonalds are intensely respectable, so she says; but her father's practice cannot bring him over two hundred a year, and the small house they live in, with only a grassplot in the rear and at the side, is not to be compared with Elmwood, which is a fine old place, every one admits. It has come out gradually that she thought the house was grander and had a tower and billiard-room, and that we kept more servants, and had a fish-pond on the premises, and velvet carpets all over the house. I would not let Fan know this for the world as I want her to like Daisy thoroughly.

And she does like her, though this little pink-and-white pet of mine is a new revelation to her, and puzzles her amazingly. She would have been glad if I had married Julia Hamilton. Julia is nice, it is true, and pretty and highly educated, and Fan says she has brains and would make a splendid wife. As Fan had never seen Daisy she did not, of course, mean to hint that she had not brains, but I suspect even now she would be better pleased if Julia were here, but I should not. Julia is self-reliant; Daisy is not. Julia has opinions of her own and asserts them too; Daisy does not. Julia can sew and run a machine; Daisy cannot. Julia gets up in the morning and goes to bed at night; Daisy does neither. Nobody ever waits for Julia; everybody waits for Daisy. Julia reads scientific works and dotes on metaphysics; Daisy does not know the meaning of the words. In short Julia is a strong, high-toned, energetic, independent woman, while Daisy is—well, innocent, confiding girl, whom I would rather have without brains than all the women like Julia with brains!

And yet I sometimes wish she did care for books, and was more interested in what interests me. I have tried reading aloud to her an hour every evening, but she generally goes to sleep or steals up behind me to look over my shoulder and see how near I am to the end of the chapter, and when I reach it she says: "Excuse me, but I have just thought of something I must tell Zillah about the dress I want to wear to-morrow. I'll be back in a moment;" and off she goes and our reading is ended for that time, for I notice she never returns. The dress is of more importance than the book, and I find her at ten or eleven trying to decide whether black or white or blue is most becoming to her. Poor Daisy! I fear she had no proper training at home. Indeed, she told me the other day that from her earliest recollection she had been taught that the main object of her life was to marry young and to marry money. Of course she did not mean anything or know how it sounded, but I would rather she had not said it, even though she had refused a millionaire for me who can hardly be called rich as riches are rated these days. If Dick Trevelyan should fail to meet his payment I should be very poor, and then what would become of Daisy, to whom the luxuries which money buys are so necessary?

Here followed several other entries in the journal, consisting mostly of rhapsodies on Daisy, and then came the following:

December 15th, 18—.

Dick has failed to meet his payments, and that after having borrowed of me two thousand more! Is he a villain, and did he know all the time that I was ruining myself? I cannot think so when I remember that look on his face as he told me about it and swore to me solemnly that up to the very last he fully expected relief from home, where he thought he had a fortune.

"If I live I will pay you some time," he said; but that does not help me now. I am a ruined man. Elmwood must be sold, and I must work to earn my daily bread. For myself I would not mind it much, and Fan, who, woman-like, saw it in the distance and warned me of it, behaves nobly, but it falls hard on Daisy.

Poor Daisy! She never said a word when I told her the exact truth, but she went to bed and cried for one whole day. I am so glad I settled that thousand on her when we were married. No one can touch that, and I told her so; but she did not say a word or seem to know what I meant. Talking, or expressing her opinion, was never in her line, and she has not of her own accord spoken to me on the subject, and when I try to talk with her about our future she shudders and cries, and says, "Please don't! I can't bear it! I want to go home to mother!"

And so it is settled that while we are arranging matters she is to visit her mother and perhaps not return till spring, when I hope to be in a better condition financially than I am at present.

One thing Daisy said which hurt me cruelly, and that was: "If I must marry poor, I might as well have married Cousin Tom, who wanted me so badly!" To do her justice, however, she added, immediately: "But I like you the best."

I am glad she said that. It will be something to



remember when she is gone, or rather when I return without her, as I am going to her mother with her, and then back to the dreary business of seeing what I have left and what I can do. I have an offer for the house, and shall sell it at once; but where my home will be next I do not know, neither would I care so much if it were not for Daisy—poor little Daisy!—who thought she had married a rich man. The only tears I have shed for my lost fortune were for her. Oh, Daisy, Daisy!

### CHAPTER III. Calamity is man's true touchstone.

Beaumont & Fletcher.

Edmwood, September 16th, 18—.

This is my journal, presented by my husband, Mr. Guy Thornton, who wishes me to write something in it every day; and when I asked him what I should write he said: "Your thoughts, and opinions, and experiences. It will be pleasant for you sometimes to look back upon your early married life and see what progress you have made since then, and will help you to recall incidents you would otherwise forget. A journal fixes things in your mind, and I know you will enjoy it, especially as no one is to see it, and you can talk to it freely as to a friend."

That is what Guy said, and I wrote it right down to copy into the book as a kind of preface or introduction. I am not much pleased with having to keep a journal, and maybe I shall have Zillah keep it for me. I don't care to fix things in my mind. I don't like things fixed, anyway. I'd rather they would be round loose, as they surely would if I had not Zillah to pick them up. She is a treasure, and it is almost worth being married to have a waiting-maid—and that reminds me that I may as well begin back at the time when I was not married, and did not want to be, if only we had not been so poor, and obliged to make so many shifts to seem richer than we were.

My maiden name was Margaret McDonald, and I am seventeen next New Year's Day. My father is of Scotch descent, and a lawyer; my mother was a Bannard, from Edinburgh, and has the better blood of the two. I am an only child, and very handsome—so everybody says; and I should know it if they did not say it, for can't I see myself in the glass? And still I really do not care so much for my good looks except as they serve to attain the end for which father says I was born.

Almost the first thing I can remember is his telling me I must marry young and marry rich, and I promised him I would, and asked if I could stay at home with mother just the same after I was married. Another thing I remember, which made a lasting impression, and that is the beating father gave me for asking before some grand people staying at our house "why we did not always have beefsteak and hot maffins for breakfast, instead of just baked potatoes and bread and butter?"

I must learn to keep my mouth shut, father said, and not tell all I know; and I profited by the lesson, and that is one reason, I suppose, why I so rarely say what I think or express an opinion, whether favourable or otherwise.

I do not believe I am deceitful, though all my life I have seen my parents try to seem what they are not; that is, try to seem like rich people, when sometimes father's practice brought him only a few hundred a year, and there were mother and myself and Tom to support.

Tom is my cousin—Tom McDonald—who lived with us and fell in love with me, though I never tried to make him. I liked him ever so much, though he used to tease me horribly, and put stones in my shoes; but still I liked him, for with all his teasing he had a great, kind, unselfish heart, and I shall never forget that look on his face when I told him I could not be his wife.

I did not like him as he liked me, and I did not want to be married at all, and if I did marry it must be to some rich man. That was the night before he started for New Zealand, where he was going to make his fortune and he wanted me to promise to wait for him, and said no one would ever love me as well as he did.

I could not promise, because even if he had all the gold mines in Peru I did not care to spend my days with him—to see him morning, noon and night, and always.

It is a good deal to ask of a woman, and I told him so, and he cried so hard—not loud, but in a pitiful kind of way which hurt me cruelly. I hear that sobbing sometimes now in my sleep, and it's like the moan of the wind round that house where Tom's mother died. Poor Tom!

I gave him a lock of my hair and let him kiss me twice, and then he went away and after that old Burton offered himself and his million to me, but I could not endure his bald head a week, and I

told him so, and when father seemed sorry and said I missed a good chance I told him I should not sell myself for gold alone. I'd run away first and go after Tom.

Then Guy Thornton came, and—and—well, he took me by storm, and I liked him better than any one I ever saw, and I married him. Everybody said he was rich, and father was satisfied and gave his consent, and thought me a most elaborate trousseau. I wondered then where the money came from. Now I know that Tom sent it. He has been very successful with his mine, and in a letter to father sent me a cheque for a hundred pounds. Father would not tell me that, but mother did and I felt worse, I think, than when I heard the sobbing. Poor Tom! I never wear one of the dresses now without thinking who paid for it, and wrote, "I am working like an ox for Daisy." Poor, poor Tom!

October 1st, 18—.

I rather like writing in my journal, for how I can say what I think, and I shall not now let Zillah make the entries. Where did I leave off? Oh, about poor Tom.

I have just had a letter from him. He has just heard of my marriage, and only said, "Heaven bless you, my darling little Daisy, and may you be very happy."

I burned the letter up and cried myself into a headache. I wish people would not love me so hard. I do not deserve it. There's Guy, my husband, more so to be pitied than Tom, because, you see, he has got me, and privately, between you and me, old journal, I am not worth the getting, and I know it perhaps better than any one else. I like Guy and believe him to be the best man in the world, and I would rather he kiss me than Tom, but do not want anybody to kiss me, and Guy is so affectionate, and his great hands are so hot.

I don't like to be married any way. If one only could have the house, and the money, and the nice things without the man! That's wicked, of course, when Guy is so kind and loves me so much. I wish he didn't, but I would not for the world let him know how I feel. I did tell him that I was not the wife he ought to have, but he would not believe me, and father was anxious, and so I married him, meaning to do the best I could. It was splendid in Paris, only Guy danced so ridiculously and would not let me waltz with those young men. As if I cared a straw for them or any other man besides Guy and Tom!

It is pleasant here at Edmwood, only the house is not so grand as I supposed, and there are not as many servants, and the family carriage is awful poky. Guy is to give me a pretty little phaeton on my birthday.

I like Miss Frances very much, only she is such a raging housekeeper, and keeps me all the while on the alert. I don't believe in these raging housekeepers, who act as if they wanted to make the bed before you are up, and set breakfast before it is ready. I don't like to get up in the morning, and I don't like to hurry, and I am always behind, and keeping somebody waiting, and that disturbs the people here very much. Miss Frances means really cross sometimes, and even Guy looks sober and disturbed when he has waited for half an hour.

I must try and do better, for both Guy and Miss Frances are as good as they can be, but then I am not one bit like them, and have never been accustomed to anything like order and regularity. At home things came round any time, and I came with them, and that suited me better than this being married, a great deal, only now I have a kind of settled feeling, and am Mrs. Guy Thornton, and Guy is good looking, and highly esteemed, and very learned, and I can see that the young ladies in the neighbourhood envy me for being his wife.

I wonder who is that Julia Hamilton Miss Frances talks about so much, and why Guy did not marry her instead of me. She too is very learned, and gets up in the morning and flies about and reads scientific articles. I asked Guy once why he did not marry her instead of a little goose like me, and he said he liked the little goose the best, and then kissed me, and crumpled my white dress all up. Poor Guy! I wish I did love him as well as he does me, but it's not in me to love any man!

December 20th, 18—.

A horrible thing has happened, and I have married a poor man after all! Guy signed for somebody and had to pay, and Edmwood must be sold, and we are to move into a stuffy little house, without Zillah, and with only one girl. It's too dreadful to think about, and I was ill for a week after Guy told me of it. I might as well have married Tom; only I like Guy the best. He looks so sorry and sad that I sometimes forget myself to pity him. I am going home to mother for a long, long time, all winter may be, and I shall enjoy it so much. Guy says I have a

thousand pounds of my own, and the interest on that will buy my dresses, and get something for Miss Frances too. She is a noble woman, and tries to bear up so brave. She says they will keep the furniture of my blue room for me, if I want it, and I do, and I mean to have Guy send it to me if he will. Oh, mother, I am so glad I am coming back, and I almost wish—No, I don't either. I like Guy, only I don't like being married!

(To be continued.)

### LITTLE SUNSHINE.

#### CHAPTER IX.

The sudden disappearance from the party of Lily Davis and Lord Mortimer Littleton excited considerable comment among the guests, and had not the former been so well known and so great a favourite among her companions her reputation would have suffered somewhat in view of the report by Miss Finkle of the conversation between Lord Mortimer and herself just before the young couple left the room.

Nobody, however, suspected Lily's purity of character. They were only surprised that she, always so careful in her walk and conversation, should have taken a step calculated to throw even the shade of suspicion upon her. They regarded the matter, though, simply in the light of a lovers' quarrel. They supposed that Lily had allowed the young lord to see her home merely to punish her lover for what she considered his unjustifiable conduct, and that, like most lovers' quarrels, the affair would end in a reconciliation.

When the next day passed, however, and the next, and the next, and no tidings were heard either of Lily or the man in whose company she had departed her acquaintances began to change their view of the matter, and all at length became satisfied that Lily had really eloped with the fascinating nobleman.

As for Ernest Hartley, the affair drove him well nigh frantic. He had loved Lily Davis passionately. Nay, he still loved her; for his was no common passion. Her memory was enshrined in his heart of heart—he could never forget her—could as yet cease to love her—still he would not now have married her to save his soul from destruction. One thing, however, he had firmly made up his mind to, and that was to call Lord Mortimer to a strict account. If he had wooed and won Lily in honest fashion and married her then he would have nothing to say in the matter, but bury his grief in his own heart, and try manfully to battle it. But if he had deceived her then he resolved that he should expiate with his life the dastardly crime. It never occurred to him that Lily could have been the tempter instead of the tempted. This was an idea so monstrous that he would not have entertained it even for a moment. Imagine his horror then when, after Lily had been a week absent, he received the following letter in Lily's handwriting:

"MR. HARTLEY—SIR: You were somewhat surprised, no doubt, at my sudden disappearance, and have probably been wondering what course I have pursued since leaving home. Perhaps it is only proper that I should make an explanation to you whom, in my childish thoughtlessness, and without knowing my own heart, I once promised to marry."

"Let it suffice to say that I never loved you as a woman should love the man whom she designs to marry, and when Lord Mortimer Littleton fell in my way I saw in him the idol of my fancy, and gave him my whole heart."

"In justice to the man with whom I have linked my fate let me say that he is not at all to blame in the matter. The first advances were made by myself, and although he told me candidly that he could not marry me, and bade me return to you and forget him, I took a solemn oath that if he did not accept my love and take me to himself, even without marriage, I would kill myself in his presence; and I should have kept my word."

"You may think this a humiliating confession, and perhaps it is, but I would not have you labour under a false impression, and so have thought it proper to lay my heart bare before you."

"Farewell. Try to forget me, and may you find somebody who will make you happier than I ever could have done."

"Yours, respectfully,

LILY DAVIS."

"And can this letter come from my pure and spotless Lily? My heart's idol! My own sweet love! My Little Sunshine!" groaned Ernest Hartley, in agony of spirit.

"Oh, Lily, Lily! would that you had died! I could have imagined you an angel then, and could have carried you in my heart through life as a sweet memory! But now—what is there left for me now? Misery! misery! misery! If I could but forget you! But no—even that poor boon is denied me. I

must carry the recollection of you with me for ever! While I live it must be to me, waking or sleeping, a constant agony! Oh, death! death! So dreaded by the many, what a welcome visitor wouldst thou be to me!"

And the strong man bowed his head and wept in agony of soul.

The same mail which brought this letter to Hartley brought another to Gabriel Flint—a letter in which she resigned her situation, and at the same time made a confession similar to that contained in the one to her lover. This he exhibited to his wife, of course, and Mrs. Flint was not slow in communicating the intelligence to Lily's shopmates, who were first stunned by the intelligence, and then terribly indignant at the duplicity and depravity of one whom they had always regarded as a model of propriety.

"I never did think much of her, for my part," said Mrs. Flint, with a sneer; "I'm always suspicious of those girls who assume so much virtue and who are so very particular as to small matters. I always thought her no better than she should be!"

"My love," interposed Mr. Flint, blandly, "you should have more charity for the poor girl. I have no doubt she was dreadfully tempted. Littleton is a fine-looking fellow, you know, besides being titled and rich. You ought to make all the excuses for her which you can. For my part I am very sorry for the poor child!"

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Flint, with well-feigned indignation, "that's just like you men. You are willing to overlook any crime in a woman so long as she is in no way connected with you. But, thanks to a virtuous mother's training, I am not quite so soft-hearted as to encourage vice. Think what the vile creature has been guilty of. She has not only brought disgrace upon herself and reflected discredit upon her shopmates, but she has brought sorrow and trouble upon as fine a young man as ever lived. The shameless creature! I should like to see her hanged!"

And strange as it may seem, while poor Lily was thus bitterly assailed, there was not one of all her shopmates, except Jennie Brown, who dared to say a single word in her defence. They had all loved her—had all thought her perfect, and there were some who would have spoken a word in her behalf but for the fear that such a course would subject them to the suspicion of indorsing her conduct. Jennie, however, was an independent little creature, and cared little for what people might say when her heart prompted her to speak.

"I don't care what you may say," she exclaimed, in answer to Mrs. Flint's harangue. "I don't believe Lily Davis has done wrong, and I wouldn't believe it if she should come and tell me so herself!"

"Oh, don't I love you for that!" exclaimed Tony Tucker. "I don't believe Lily has either." And Tony clenched his huge fists tightly and cast a look of withering contempt at Mrs. Flint.

"Everybody is entitled to his or her opinion," said Mrs. Flint, sarcastically; "but whenever I form an opinion I have some groundwork for it, and perhaps those who are so ready to take her part can explain her conduct. I'm sure I wish I could see some excuse for her, but I can't for the life of me, and if anybody else can I should be happy to listen to it."

"Well, I'll tell you what I think about the matter," said Tony Tucker, who seemed to think that Mrs. Flint's conversation was directed as much to him as to Jennie. "I think there's been some treachery about it, that's what I think. Do you s'pose a gal with a head as level as Little Sunshine's would take and go to work and run away with such a sardine as that 'ere Lord Mortimer, as they call him? Why, it don't stand to reason. I'd as soon think of a bird of Paradise rannin' away with a turkey-buzzard, or an innocent lamb with a sneaking, thieving fox."

"But how about the letter which Mr. Flint received?" ask Mrs. Flint, vindictively; "it is clearly in Miss Davis's handwriting, and she surely could not have been coerced into writing it."

"Yes, how about the letter, Tony?" asked two or three of the girls at once.

"I don't care anything about the letter," responded Tony. "I tell you there's been some trick played on to the poor gal—and I'll take and go to work and bet my brains on to it!"

"I am glad you have got so much confidence in her, I'm sure," said Mrs. Flint, with a sneer. "I wish I had, but it would take a great deal to convince me that she is not a brazen, impudent, shameless creature!"

"I wish the poor gal was here to speak for herself," said Tony Tucker, with great feeling, "and you would soon find out whether she is innocent or guilty."

"So do I," said Mr. Flint, rolling his eyes piously upward and affecting great sympathy. "I really wish the poor girl was here to speak for herself."

"She is here to speak for herself!" exclaimed a voice which made them all start as though a mine had suddenly exploded, and, looking up, they discovered Lily Davis, pale as death, but with blazing eyes and teeth hard set, standing on the threshold of the door—"she is here to speak for herself!" she repeated as she advanced into the room and fixed her large blue eyes searchingly upon Gabriel Flint. "She is here to vindicate her honour and to unmask a vindictive and unscrupulous hypocrite! Look at me, Gabriel Flint! look at me, if you dare!"

Flint's countenance assumed an ashen hue, and his limbs trembled beneath him with terror, but by a great effort he managed to meet the gaze of Lily Davis, and to stammer forth:

"This don't look like innocence, Miss Davis. If you have anything to say in explanation of your conduct—and I sincerely hope you have—we are ready to listen to you, and to give you the benefit of any doubts which may arise. But blustering and false accusations will do no good—not a particle—they will only make your case look blacker, my child—only make it look blacker! Now go on and tell your story quietly, like a sensible girl, and we will listen patiently and be as charitable as we can."

"Miserable villain!" exclaimed Lily Davis, with flashing eyes, "you laid your plans well, but they have failed; and, although I cannot punish you as you deserve—for unfortunately I have been unable thus far to obtain any proof of your complicity—yet you cannot escape the judgment of a Power which is greater than any earthly tribunal."

"A few weeks ago I exposed your canting hypocrisy and contemptible dishonesty, and forced you to do justice to the girls in your employ. By this act I aroused your enmity, and, hiding your dislike under the specious garb of friendship, you set to work to ruin me. You called to your assistance in this dirty work a scoundrel who apes the manner and claims the title of a lord, and the party you got up for your employees was the trap which you set to catch me. Your plan succeeded but too well, though, thank Heaven, I escaped the frightful fate which you intended for me."

"By means of a forged letter—forged by you, I honestly believe, as you have my handwriting to copy from in letters which you have received from time to time from me—you have blackened my character in the eyes of the only man I love on earth, and turned him against me. You should be proud of your achievement. You have succeeded in rendering miserable and friendless a poor orphan girl, whose only fault was that she assumed the championship of her down-trodden sisters. But the time is not far distant when you will tremble at the voice of justice. Even now you are shaking with fear in the presence of a weak girl."

"What will you do when the meshes of the law have enveloped you, and you have to deal with stern, unrelenting men? Poor and friendless as I am, I would not exchange places with you, with all your wealth, for I have the consciousness of innocence, which you can never have!"

"My poor, dear, unfortunate little girl," interrupted Flint, with a hypocritical whine, "I am sorry that you are not disposed to take my advice, and make some defence instead of indulging in vituperation and abuse. I can only account for your refusal to do so in one way—which is, that you have no defence to make. In a moment of delicious delirium you made a false step. You fell desperately in love with a man far above you in the social scale—you allowed your passion to run away with your judgment, you eloped with him in the full flush of your ecstasy, and, reckless as to consequences, you wrote me the particulars—but you awoke from your delicious dream to the frightful reality of your situation, and now you wish to set yourself right with your shopmates by denying your confession. I cannot say that I blame you for this. It is excusable under the circumstances. I pity you very much, my poor child, and wish it were in my power to undo the past and to place you in a state of innocence again; but that is impossible, and the only advice I can give you now is to seek some reformatory institution established by charitable persons for such as you, and resolve hereafter to lead a better life."

And having thus delivered himself, with swimming eyes and choking utterance, Mr. Flint turned upon his heel and left the shop, congratulating himself, as he did so, that he had made an impression on the minds of Lily's companions which it would be hard for her to eradicate, and we are sorry to say that he was not far astray in his calculation, for when Lily, with the flush of indignation mantling on her fine face, turned toward her mates for sympathy, she found that all save Jennie Brown had averted their faces and would not look at her.

For a moment a deadly faintness assailed her, and her heart seemed to lie like a lump of lead in her bosom. Rousing herself, however, by a great effort,

she advanced into the middle of the room, and in a voice touchingly pathetic said:

"Girls—my companions through many a weary day—you have known me so long—you don't believe what that bad man just said! You cannot think me the vile creature he would have you believe me to be! Have you ever seen anything in me which would warrant such a supposition? Have I not always conducted myself properly? Have I not always tried to do right? Heaven help me, is it not enough that I am poor and alone in the world? Must I be thought vile, as well as poor and friendless? Oh, I beseech you, do not all turn from me or my heart will break! Do you all believe me guilty? Will no one speak a kind word to me?"

And as Lily Davis broke into a paroxysm of tears Jennie Brown flew to her side, and throwing her arms around her cried out, while the light of love and sympathy beamed in her eyes:

"Yes, I will speak kindly to you, Lily dear, and I do not believe you guilty, and I wouldn't believe it if old Flint and a hundred to back him should swear to it on a stack of Bibles as high as this house! Don't cry, Lily! I will stand by you as long as I have breath in my body! If the rest of the girls are fools enough to think you could do wrong because appearances are against you let them enjoy their opinion and much good may it do them, but you and I will go away together and find work somewhere else!" And the warm-hearted girl kissed her unhappy companion again and again.

"Oh, Jennie! Dear Jennie!" exclaimed Lily, between her sobs, "I thank you so much for this! You don't know how much your faith and trust in me relieve me! I was so unhappy—oh, so very miserable—I think I must have died if you had not spoken! It is so dreadful to be deserted by everybody when you do not deserve it. All my former friends in my lodgings believe me guilty, but I think I could have borne that if Ernest, whom I love so much—oh, so much—!" And here the poor girl broke down utterly and could not speak for sobbing.

"You don't mean to tell me," said Jennie Brown, indignantly, "that Ernest Hartley believes you guilty?"

"Yes," responded Lily, when she could command herself far enough to speak; "even he refuses to see or speak to me! I met him on my way here and he avoided me as though there were pollution in my very presence."

"Then he isn't worthy of you!" exclaimed Jennie, indignantly, "and I'm sure I wouldn't shed a single tear on his account. I always liked Ernest Hartley, but now I believe he's a mean, suspicious, good-for-nothing fellow! Let him go his way and you go yours, and remember, Lily, there's as good fish in the sea as ever come out of it!"

"Don't blame him, Jennie! Please don't!" pleaded Lily, "he has been deceived, but some day will learn the truth and then he will see how greatly he has wronged me. And, now, Jennie, I wish to ask a favour of you. You threw out a suggestion a moment since which meets my views exactly. You said you were willing to go with me and seek employment elsewhere. It is the very favour I would have asked. I cannot bear to be left alone in this great trouble. I want some one in whom I can repose confidence and to whom I can tell my griefs. I do not wish to return to my boarding-house. I would not go back there for the world till my friends there have changed their opinion of me. I have hired a furnished room, and I wish you would go there and live with me and we can keep house together."

"I'll do it," said Jennie, readily; "it will suit me exactly, for I do not like my boarding-place, and if we have a room of our own we can be as independent as we please. We will form a sort of co-partnership. Your money shall be my money, and my money shall be your money. If you are ill I will nurse you, and if I am ill you can nurse me. But we are both pretty healthy, thank fortune, and I don't believe we will give each other much trouble on that account. So cheer up, Lily dear, and don't cry any more, for if everybody else deserts you I will stand by you till the last horn blows!"

"You are a dear, good girl!" exclaimed Lily, through her tears, "and I shall never forget your kindness—never! never!"

"Kindness," rejoined Jenny, "pshaw! no kindness about it! I am acting as much for myself as I am for you. Oh, won't it be glorious to keep house together and be our own landlady! To go and come as we please—to have just what we please on our table—to do our own marketing—and to scold the grocer and butcher to our hearts' content! Come along, Lily. I'll go with you at once! I want you to show me our castle. I'll send Tony to my boarding-house to tell them I have given up my room—then I'll go home with you and to-morrow I'll send for my trunk."



Jennie threw on her hat and shawl while she was talking, and then she and her sorrow-stricken friend left the room together. They were obliged to pass through the front shop to reach the street, and as they did so Jennie took occasion to inform Mrs. Flint that she would not return to work again, having determined to join fortunes with Lily.

"Just as you please, Miss Brown," said Mrs. Flint, curtly; "but I am inclined to think you will regret the step you have taken ere long. Charity is an excellent Christian virtue, undoubtedly, when it is properly bestowed, but charity to such as that vile girl by your side I'm afraid is thrown away."

Neither of the girls thought it necessary to reply to this heartless remark, but passed silently out and took their way toward the house wherein Lily had taken up her abode.

(To be continued.)

THE copyright of Keble's "Christian Year," which, published originally in 1836, for years brought the author a royalty of more than 800*l.* per annum, has just expired, and it is therefore to be expected that scores of new and, perhaps, cheap editions will deluge the market, as the work has not yet lost its popularity.

A PASTEBOARD MODEL OF PARIS.—One of the most curious exhibits forwarded to Vienna is a model of Paris in pasteboard, and measuring twenty yards in circumference; it is a faithful copy of the capital before the Communists changed its features, or the Germans its suburbs. Each public building is distinctly shown, as also the chief streets; the fortifications look as large as life. Several large manufacturers accustomed to apply for and occupy space at universal exhibitions are conspicuous by their absence this time at Vienna; they decline to display their new processes, believing, as they allege, the Germans would at once copy without paying for them.

ARTIFICIAL STONE.—The use of this building material is on the increase. The Ransome Patent Stone Company have recently published a pamphlet, descriptive of the process of manufacture and the application of their artificial stone. Flints are dissolved by means of caustic alkali, under high pressure, so as to form silicate of soda, a kind of water-glass. This is then rapidly mixed with a proportion of very fine and sharp siliceous sand in a pug mill, so as to form a soft plastic mass, which can be moulded into any shape that is desired. The soft stone is next immersed in a bath of chloride of calcium solution, which is made to penetrate it by hydraulic or atmospheric pressure. Whenever this solution comes into contact with the silicate of soda the two liquids are decomposed, the silica taking possession of the calcium and forming the hard solid silicate of lime, and the soda uniting with the chlorine to form chloride of sodium in a small quantity. Instead then of the particles of sand being covered with a thin film of the liquid silicate of soda, they are covered and united together with a film of solid silicate of lime, one of the most indestructible substances known. The small quantity of soluble chloride of sodium, one of the results of decomposition, is then washed out of the stone by a douche of clean water, or by hydraulic pressure, its complete removal being insured by chemical tests. The stone is then dried and is fit for use.

SINGULAR GOOD FRIDAY CUSTOMS.—Just outside the church of St. Bartholomew-the-Great, Smithfield, in the oldest churchyard in the City, on Good Friday might have been seen the aged rector, the Rev. John Abbiss, putting down twenty-one shillings on a gravestone, which the same number of poor widows picked up. The custom is nearly as old as the church, and originated in the will of a lady, who left a sum of money to pay for the sermon and to yield these shillings to be distributed over her grave; but as the will is lost and her tomb gone, the traditionary spot of her interment has been chosen for this very singular distribution—a strange part of the tradition being that any one too rigid in the joints to pick up the money was not to receive it. The rev. rector is now eighty-seven years of age, and was presented to the living in 1815. On Good Friday, at the church of Allhallows, Lombard Street, another sermon was preached under similar provisions of the will of Peter Symonds, dated 1587, and gifts distributed, consisting of a new penny and a packet of raisins, which were given to sixty of the younger scholars of Christ's Hospital, who attended the service. Under the same will the children of Langbourn Ward Schools who help in the choir, and the children of the Sunday-school, received each a bun and various sums of new money, ranging from 1*d.* to 1*s.*, besides the poor of the parish, on whom was bestowed 1*s.* each and a loaf. The sermon was preached by the Rev. C. Mackenzie, the rector, from John xix. 19, and the gifts were bestowed by the churchwardens, Messrs. Twells and Howdon, at the vestry door. The sum given away was close upon

10*l.*, and which, until the railway in Liverpool Street effaced the spot, used to be distributed over the tomb of the donor.

## MARRIED IN MASK.

### CHAPTER XV.

Her angel's face,  
As the great eye of Heaven shined bright,  
And made a sunshine in the shady place.

"CAREY'S ALLEY" is a name given to five buildings two of which seem to have been constructed for workshops; but no one of the present generation can recollect them as such. One is three storeys high, and another four, and each floor was divided up to "accommodate" three or four families. The three other buildings are two storeys each, and two rooms deep, and each storey was let to a family. There is literally no yard to these premises, the space between the front and rear houses being covered by a number of shanties, used as stables, the upper parts of the work-shop-like houses being kept as hen-coops in addition to the human occupancy. The basement of one of the two-storey buildings was used as a stable; another as a shop for the storing of rotten bones, rags, etcetera, and the third as a lumber-place. Filth is everywhere. In one of these stables were two women, both prematurely old, and in a state of half-insensible intoxication.

Carey's Alley, after being cleared out by the police, was again tenanted by a number of poor, miserable beings, and into their society the reader is invited to enter for a moment that he may see a calm, beautiful angel moving about on her errands of mercy, serene, pure, and self-sacrificing in the mission upon which she believed Heaven had sent her. In these haunts of poverty, shame and crime Bessie Truelove won her crown.

The night was stormy. The rain and wind drove all within doors. None were abroad but the homeless and the police, who stood beneath awnings and in the shelter of doorways to escape the violence and chill of the falling rain.

The tenants of Carey's Alley had shelter, and those of them who had been fortunate in their begging or thieving were having a carouse upon the vile liquor of the neighbourhood. Intoxication and disease were in many rooms together. Occasionally vile songs broke upon the night and mingled with the wail of helpless and invalid children.

In one of the stables a lantern with a caudle in it gave a feeble light to the unfortunate ones stretched at length or seated upon the floor. Two old women in rags were seated together and drinking from a black bottle. There was no chair in the place, and every one was upon the floor.

As the old women drank the whisky from time to time they chatted together in maudlin glee. They were just drunk enough to be in a good humour, and, having had no food that day, they had invested their pennies gained in begging in liquor. This would keep them warm through the night, cause them to sleep, and on the morrow, if their begging proved successful, they intended to invest in food.

Occasionally they exchanged words with a half-tipsy man, who sat against the side of the stable, and nodded and talked at intervals. A white goat had made friends with the man, and was reposing beside him.

There was something stretched out in a dark corner of the stable upon a blanket. It was covered with another blanket, and was very still. It seemed not to heed the drunken conversation. Perhaps it was sleeping. How sweet is sleep to the poor and starving! It is oblivion, and oblivion is peace.

Finally the something stirred. It was not dead then—and they say that while there is life there is hope. Was there hope for it? Presently the something uttered a moan. Another and another moan came from between the two blankets in the corner. Then the wail of an infant was heard, and the tipsy man raised his head and cursed the baby. It was silent then under the blankets.

One of the old women took down the lantern from the wooden peg where it hung, and approached the two blankets. She threw the light of the candle into the corner, and it revealed the face of a mother, pale and haggard, and clasping her baby under the blankets.

The eyes of the mother were wide open, and glaring in the intensity of her suffering. Dark eyes they were, and must have been beautiful before suffering had dimmed their lustre. The hair of the woman, long and black, stretched out dishevelled and unkempt upon the lower blanket.

The old woman with the lantern offered the mother the black bottle. It was intended for kindness; but the mother refused to drink.

"No," she said, "I promised her not to touch it any more."

The old woman muttered her disapprobation of that promise, and intimated that the contents of the bottle would bring sleep.

"No matter," said the mother. "She will come and give me something to make me sleep."

"Oh, what a fool!" responded the old woman, seating herself beside the sufferer. "What lady would come out in such a storm to see such as you?"

"She will come," said the mother, earnestly. "She never breaks her word. Oh! I wish she would come quick!—my baby is dying of hunger. Hark!"

Some one was knocking at the door of the stable. A dog, hitherto silent and concealed under a manger, sprang up and barked furiously at the sound.

The tipsy man swore terrible oaths as he arose to his feet, and with rage approached the intruder who sought admittance.

He opened the door cautiously, for he was a thief, and ever on the alert for the police. A huge bar of iron was in his hand, and he would murder rather than be taken by an officer.

In the midst of his rage and malice the iron bar fell to his side; his expression of malignity vanished, and he muttered, with rough kindness:

"Come in. You are welcome always."

The door flew open, and "The Good Woman" entered, muffled in her cloak and hood.

She could gain admittance to dens where brave men dared not enter.

Heaven was her shield. What could harm her? The light shone upon her pale, refined face, and there was a smile there.

Who could withstand the radiant sympathy and love of Bessie Truelove's countenance?

She spoke kindly to the man, and gave him some money, saying:

"Go out and buy food for yourself and the old women. Don't get any more rum, for I know you are all hungry, and need food."

"Bless you, good woman!" said the man, as his eyes brightened at sight of the money. "We are hungry, and I will do just as you say."

He passed out of the stable, and she approached the emaciated mother, who looked up with an exultant laugh as she saw a nursing-bottle full of milk held out to her for her baby.

Bessie Truelove carried under her waterproof cloak a large basket of delicacies for the poor woman, and she was soon seated upon the end of the blanket and feeding the mother with jelly with a spoon.

The poor mother laughed and cried, and said, exultantly:

"I told 'em you would come and save my baby. I know it."

"Yes," said Mrs. Truelove. "I couldn't stay away, for my friend Jesus said 'My sister is faint and ill. Go to her and help her.' Oh, if you could know the sweetness and depth of His love for all who suffer!"

"Oh! do you think your Friend can love anyone like me?"

The words were gasped out rather than spoken.

"Oh! yes. Jesus loves you better than the rich, better than those who have no cross of agony to bear. He came to the earth for the relief of the poor and the suffering, and the outcast, for those that nobody else would look at or care for. And the more unfortunate and fallen you are the more tenderly does He reach out His arms to win you back. Whisper His name whenever you can, and be patient for His sake, and you and your baby will have a bright and beautiful home some day in Heaven."

"Yes, yes," said the poor outcast, laying her pale, emaciated face in the lap of the good woman, and shedding tears. "I believe in Jesus, because you make me. If He is like you I must love Him. I do. I shall soon go to Him now. Will you get a home for my poor, little baby when I am dead?"

"Oh! yes. The good Sisters of Charity always take little children. I will see that your little one receives every care and attention."

A smile of heavenly sweetness crossed the haggard face of the poor woman. The assurances of Bessie Truelove carried with them the impress of truth, and the poor creature saw that her child would never be allowed to suffer as she had suffered. From hunger alone had she been forced to take her weary life among the degraded of her sex. The good woman had slowly but surely won her back.

The old woman with the bottle patted Bessie Truelove upon the shoulder and said:

"You're good, you're good. Reno will kill anybody that hurts you. He's a good son to his old mother, and he's so glad you give him money to git her bread. He said he'd fight like thunder if anybody harmed you."

"I don't want your son to fight for me. I want him to work and earn money for you."

The old woman laughed a horrible, mocking laugh. Then she said:

"It's no use. Fate is agin some folks for ever. He has tried hard, poor Reno, poor Reno."

As if the despair of her son's life filled her own soul with agony too powerful to endure, she arose and rejoined the other old woman in the stable, and again the two sought oblivion in the bottle.

Bessie Truelove sat with the mother's head resting in her lap, and passing her smooth, white, delicate hand over the poor woman's forehead to soothe her to sleep.

After a time the mother raised her head abruptly, and said:

"Won't you tell me your name before I die?"

"What for?" said Mrs. Truelove.

"Because when I go to Jesus I want to talk to Him about you, and call you by your name."

"Bessie Truelove is my name," said the good woman, softly, for the poor woman's words had touched her deeply.

"How strange!"

"Why is it strange?"

"Because I saw a little girl once that looks just like you, and her name was Bessie too."

Mrs. Truelove was seized with a trembling, and her whole being thrilled with excitement.

"Oh, my child, my child!" she cried, in anguish.

"Have you seen her? Have you seen my little Bessie, my lost child? Tell me how she looked—her eyes, her hair, her description?"

"She had blue eyes, and she had a chain and harp around her neck," said the woman.

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Truelove.

"My Bessie wore a golden chain and harp. It must have been she. Oh! tell me more. When, where did you see that child?"

"In the shanty of Red Eyed Mag, that woman who was murdered and that they made such a fuss about and never could find out who did it."

"How did you happen to be in that shanty?"

"Red Eyed Mag was my sister."

"Tell me all you know about that child. Where did she go after the woman was killed?"

"A boy named Sam carried her off. He was a kind fellow was Sam."

"How do you know that Sam carried her off?"

"Because I saw him one night walking with her. He had hold of her hand, and the little thing seemed to love him. He told me Red Eyed Mag had beat him and chased him out of the shanty when she was drunk. He didn't seem to know anything about the murder."

"Where was Sam living when you met him?"

"I don't know. He wouldn't tell me. I think he had some burglary plan on foot, and wanted to keep dark. But I heard an awful story about him afterwards."

"What was that?"

"I can't bear to tell you. I'm afraid you can't stand it."

"Speak! speak! Heaven will give me strength to hear anything."

The invalid mother paused before she revealed the painful rumour.

"They say that Sam and a little girl were under the wharf when it burnt up, and that their bodies never could be found."

No sooner had these words been uttered than one of the old women who were drinking together from the bottle arose to her feet and abruptly left the stable. Her half-tipsy companion looked after her with amazement.

When the old woman had closed the stable door behind her she paused in the narrow belt of space styled a yard. The rain was falling upon her; but she fancied that amid the sounds of drunken revelry in the buildings of Carey's Alley she heard the door which opened from the street into the hall just before her fly open. She crouched in the darkness close to the earth.

She was not a moment too soon. The thief, called Reno, was indeed returning from his expedition. He had faithfully expended the money Mrs. Truelove had given him for food, and now passed from the house to the stable close to the crouching figure which he did not see.

The instant he closed the stable door the old woman arose, and with wonderful agility passed out through the hall of the house and escaped into the street. She was anxious to avoid the desperado, and desired to be snatched with no questions as to her destination.

Not until she had passed a dozen rows of buildings in her tortuous course did she pause under a street lamp and reflect upon her plan of action. As the lamplight fell upon her miserable and ragged figure, coated with rain, it could be seen that she had pale blue eyes and thin yellow hair. She was small and wiry looking in person, and her face and hands and naked feet were begrimed with dirt and stable manure.

As a policeman appeared in the distance she crouched under some dry-goods boxes on the pavement, and he passed by at length without seeing her.

Then she arose again and held on her way, winding in, and out among the tortuous streets until she reached the neighbourhood of the river.

She paused before a sailor's boarding-house which looked out upon the stream and sang a ball.

A man answered the summons, and was greeted by the cautiously whispered words:

"Now I am ready for the rest of my clothes. Show me to that room again, and give me something to eat. I must be off before daylight."

"Great Jupiter! what a surprise!" exclaimed the man upon recognizing the voice. "Come along, there is a light ahead. You stayed away longer than I expected."

"There was no help for it," said the ragged visitor.

"Lead on."

The two passed through the hall until they reached in the darkness a small closet, where a lamp was burning faintly. A dozen little lamps were standing upon a table there, trimmed and ready for use. One of these the proprietor of the place lighted, and took it up he led his guest up a narrow flight of stairs to a room.

"Where is the trunk?" inquired the miserable, rain-soaked guest.

The proprietor pointed it out in a corner under the bed. Then he dragged it out and unlocked it.

"You are a decent cunning," he said.

The old woman smiled at the compliment, for it was professional, but only answered:

"Now hurry here with something to eat and a glass of ale, while I strip off these rags."

The proprietor disappeared, and the old woman with marvellous rapidity flung aside garments that were unfit for a pig, and washed her face, arms, and feet. Then she took from the trunk a sailor's blue jacket and trousers, and a checked shirt, and good shoes. In a few minutes she stood before the glass surveying herself, in the garb of a sailor. A wonderful transformation in dress and manners had come over her.

She stuck a tarpaulin on the side of her head, chuckled at her new appearance, and then whirled about the room in a sailor's hornpipe, merry and swift as a kitten.

When the proprietor returned with a dish of cold meat and a glass of foaming ale he was greeted by the remark:

"I'm in luck, by jingo! to-night!"

"I'm glad of that, Pryor," was the response.

"You beat all the detectives I ever saw for disguises. But won't you sleep here till morning?"

"Impossible," replied the detective. "I have been utterly foiled and thrown off the scent so long that I began to think that I was of no use to anybody any more. I have struck the track again; I think I have either got all the threads of this web into my hands, or else a fire has burnt them all up for ever."

"How's size?" said the keeper of the boarding-house.

"I'll tell you," said Pryor. "The boy and girl I'm hunting were burnt up in that wharf fire, you remember, that swept off so much valuable shipping."

"That was only a rumour, my dear fellow. That boy and girl that they said were burnt up were picked up by a ship just come in, and were landed on the other side of the river."

"By jingo! there's luck for a fellow, in one night!" exclaimed Pryor. "I've struck three tracks, all leading into one. And now you tell me the boy and girl didn't burn up after all! How do you know this?"

"From at least a dozen sailors who came here to board that very week. They said—I remember well—that the boy and girl were picked up by their ship, and after an hour or so were landed at this side, and higher up the stream."

"That's conclusive," said the detective. "That's all the evidence I want. Now leave me alone, for I want to think—but, stay! Are any of that ship's crew to be found?"

"No," was the response. "The ship sailed, and they are all at sea now."

"Well, then, I shall have to work it out from my own brains. I will keep this room for some time, for I've got to hang about the docks in this rig until I find somebody who saw the boy and girl after they landed. Do you know what wharf the ship landed at?"

"No."

"Very well," said the detective. "Leave me now, and I will go out after a while. Keep dark as usual."

"Certainly," was the reply of the host as he left the room.

Pryor sat down then and ate his supper. After he had finished the ale he fell into a reverie. His thoughts ran thus:

"Sam is alive and has the little girl doubtless yet. His house is burned up, and he's probably sleeping now with Bessie in the streets, or in some barrel. I must watch sharp for him at night. They say he has helped that gang with their barginaries. But some of them know where he is hiding now. He has out their acquaintances for some good reason. Why should he quit their society unless he is afraid of them? They must have given him better shelter than a wharf. That's it. Sam left them for fear. They fed him, and saw that he had a roof over him. He would not have given up these comforts without good reason. He is afraid of them. Why? Because he must have had something to do with the murder of the woman."

"One of the gang, whom I passed myself off as a tramp, told me that he believed Sam killed the woman, as he left him that night alone with her, and he could not ascertain that any other of the gang had been at the shanty after he had left Sam alone with her. That looks reasonable. The boy must have killed her, or must have witnessed the killing. They say he's a fearless dog, and stood up manfully for the little girl, and got severe beatings for his pains. There is the motive for the killing. If I can track him out now I shall find the little girl, shall get the harp and chain for Rudd, and probably shall put my hands on the real murderer of Red Eyed Mag. But if he is the real murderer he will not show himself much in the streets. He will think that he is suspected by the gang, and will keep out of their way if he can. He will also be afraid of meeting the officers of the law. He will only go out at night, rob for a living, and lay low in the daytime. He must have a more private hiding-place than a dry-goods box! A murderer will not expose his person so freely as that. No, no, I was wrong. I won't find him in any barrel or box."

"But then there is another side to this business. I pumped Red Eyed Mag's sister in the stable pretty thoroughly. She stands up for the boy. She says Sam wouldn't murder. She thinks some one of the gang has stated this story to divert suspicion from himself. Women have pretty strong instincts sometimes in these matters. She says Sam is a good-hearted chap, and that there's no such thing as murder for him. By jingo! how she stood up for him when I tried to argue with her on the facts. She thinks Sam saw the deed done and then ran away to avoid being called as a witness, thinking the gang would kill him if he testified. That may be so. In that view of the case I must find him and show him how he can divulge the truth and be protected until money is given him to get out of the country. Red Eyed Mag's brother will spend money to protect the witnesses. He said he would."

"Now how shall I find him? How shall I strike the track just at the point he came ashore from that ship?"

"Did he go ashore with only the little girl, or did some passenger or person walk a little way with him and bear him say where he was going now for shelter? There must have been a great deal of talk about him and the little girl among the people who landed. The circumstances were such as would attract much attention to him and her as they went ashore."

"Pryor, old man, you must brush up your wits to track this boy. Your three employers are deeply interested in your putting your eyes upon him. Find out where that ship landed. That will not be very difficult. Then hang around that wharf and talk to people. Some of the wharf people must have seen the boy and girl land, and may have noted the circumstances under which they passed away into the streets. That's your true course, old man. Go straight to that wharf. That's your true line of action. Now start, my gay sailor boy."

The detective arose to his feet, and after locking his trunk passed from the room and made his way down to the street. His course then was up the river. It was still raining. He followed the line of shipping until he reached a point on the dock about half a mile above the great fire.

"They must have landed somewhere in this neighbourhood," he said to himself. "Whom do I know hereabouts?"

The detective paused and ran over in his mind the names of persons with whom he was acquainted along the wharfs of the river. At last he recalled the name of a man who kept a beer-shop and sold liquor to sailors.

"That's the boy for me," he said. "Tim Regan is sharp, and keeps his eyes and ears open. I'll try a glass of ale with him, anyway."

He walked on then until he reached the beer-shop near the river. He was delighted to find it still open. He encountered there a party of sailors drinking and telling of their adventures upon the sea. He joined them at once, gave the name of the vessel he pretended to have landed from, and invited them all to



drink with him. He arose at once into high favour. Then he sang a song of the sea for their entertainment. Other drinks and songs followed. Finding a favourable opportunity at last, he took, Tim Regan, the proprietor of the place, aside, and said:

"Tim, did you recognize me? Hush! I'm Pryor." The man looked at him in surprise, recognized him for the first time, and said:

"What's up? I took you for a genuine blue-jacket."

"I'm hunting for a little girl that's stolen from her parents. They say she and a boy were burnt up under a wharf at the great fire just below here on the river. But I hear a different tale. They say now a ship landed somewhere in this neighbourhood which had picked up the children. I want to find out where she put in."

"What was the name of the ship?" asked Regan, in the same low tone as his customer.

The detective gave him the name of the vessel.

"You're all right," was the answer of Regan. "That ship was lying, to my certain knowledge, at the first wharf above my place. You are not five hundred feet from the place this minute. The reason I remember it so well is this—the harbour-master came in here to drink, and said he had had some trouble with the captain of that vessel about what both she should have."

"All right," said Pryor, tearing himself away from the revelers.

He passed out into the rain, reached the dock alone at hand, and found no difficulty, by the aid of the street lamps, in recognizing the wharf to which Regan had directed him.

It was covered with boxes and barrels awaiting shipment.

Tall masts of vessels were enclosing it on three sides, but the crews were sleeping.

A solitary ship lantern hung aloft in the rigging of one ship.

By light Pryor mounted to the dock by the gangway plank, saw that no one was on the watch, and then, crouching under a boat that was swung amidships and covered with canvas, and stretched himself on the deck to sleep. He was secure from the drip of the rain, and by the music of its pattering he soon lost consciousness and slumbered heavily.

He knew in the morning he would be taken by the crew for a drunken sailor who had crawled on board the wrong ship.

Before he slept however one thought was uppermost in his mind. It was the hope of success—professional success. He had been baffled long as to the track of his game. To find Sam he had, under various disguises, dwelt with thieves and vagabonds. He had played his part as none but he could play it. He could disguise his voice as well as his person. He had already wormed out of the gang who formerly frequented Red Eyed Mag's shanty many of their adventures and haunts. They believed him to be what he represented himself—an escaped convict from some prison. But he was utterly foiled in his attempts to gain from them any information as to the whereabouts of Sam. They evidently were ignorant upon the subject, or some of them had motives for silence. But he learned from them that the murdered woman had a sister, and that her place of shelter was in Carey's Alley.

He then directed his attention to the inmates of the stable, and disguised as an old woman and supplied with a bottle of whisky made their acquaintance and lived with them for days. The sister of Red Eyed Mag had divulged to him gradually what she knew about Sam and the little girl. But the one important fact of the children being connected in some way with the fire she had never disclosed to the disguised detective for the simple reason that she was not made cognizant of it until the very day on which Mrs. Truelove came to relieve her. The instant therefore that Pryor overheard her conversation regarding Bessie and her protector he saw that he was again upon a clue which might lead him to Sam or to his corpse. Hence the promptness with which he arose and stole out from the loathsome den of poverty and crime in Carey's Alley.

Thus when he closed his eyes in sleep under the boat upon the ship the last conscious thought which lingered with him was:

"To-morrow I shall know doubtless some one on this wharf who witnessed the exit of Sam from the vessel."

But the patient, crafty, indefatigable detective was not destined, so soon as he expected, to gratify his three employers. Even professional cunning may be baffled by a single act of carelessness on the part of a stranger. The most trivial events sometimes change the whole current of a man's thoughts and acts.

Pryor in the sailor's garb slumbered on undisturbed. A watch has been set on the ship. But

they were in port—why should they fear to sleep? All slept. The rain at last ceased to fall. Huge masses of black clouds hung like a pall over the city and the river.

The night was still and the rows of masts along the docks looked like spectres with their outstretched arms and their intricate tracery of cordage. Some of the vessels lying near to the locality of Pryor's slumbering form were loaded with cargoes of great value. One ship in particular, the "Vesta," a huge merchantman belied to the ship where he slept, had just arrived with a valuable cargo of volvals and silks. She was temporarily secured to her sister ship. On the morrow she was expected to have her own place alongside the wharf.

Some one on the morrow would be notified of the arrival of a quarter of a million of wealth in goods. It was a large amount to be consigned to one person. And yet the "Vesta's" cargo was for one owner alone. Who was the fortunate owner? Was the owner fortunate?

Hark! A fearful cry arose upon the hushed night. No one seemed to hear it. It came from a solitary man in the street, a large man with a powerful voice. And yet his cry was unheeded by Pryor or the sailors. Again the man shouted the ominous, blood-curdling cry:

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" Surely some one must awake under the terror and the earnestness of that solitary man's cry.

But no, the sleepers were as if dead. Wealth was about to take to itself wings and fly away. Some one was on the verge of financial ruin.

Again the man gave the warning cry at the top of his lungs, and as he did so a huge puff of smoke ascended from between decks and rolled away inland over the prostrate form of Pryor.

The detective, weary and buried in profound slumber, noted it not.

Again the smoke came up from the interior of the vessel and scattered over the entire surface of the upper deck in the sudden breeze which blew from the east.

The sleeper turned uneasily on his hard bed as if something had disturbed him in his dreams.

Presently the smoke came up in huge volumes, and sweeping away over the deck enveloped him in a cloud which nearly suffocated him.

He awoke, started up in surprise, and heard the cry from the shore repeated:

"Fire! Fire!"

He scrambled to his feet and ran to the fore-castle of the ship, and aroused the watch.

The united voices of the men then rang through the vessel, summoning those between decks to hurry up for their lives.

While all was confusion, and the smoke blinded all eyes, the wind freshened. The crew came scrambling up from the forward part of the ship, and saw that their companions in the centre of the vessel had no chance of escape. They must already have suffocated in the smoke which issued densely from the only avenues of exit from between decks.

Then the survivors leaped upon the wharf and scattered in every direction, shouting:

"Fire! Fire!"

Up from the funeral pile of their shipmates the flames now darted like tongues amid the smoke. The blaze caught the tarred ropes of the rigging and climbed rapidly up among the spars and furled sails. Then came the booming of the alarm bell.

But it was too late.

The fire had gained rapid headway in a cargo of inflammable materials, and the whole fabric of the upper spars and cordage was in flames, superbly beautiful, superbly terrible.

Upon all the adjacent shipping was a brilliant light and cries of alarm mingled with the hoarse utterances of command.

Other ships were in imminent peril, for the wind was now blowing a gale. There were desperate efforts made by skilful officers to withdraw their vessels from the wharf to the opposite shore.

Some were successful, others unsuccessful.

A ship and a brig which had dropped some of their sails were caught by the gale and swept directly upon the burning vessel.

Instantly they were in flames aloft.

The sailors took to the small boats and pulled out into the stream.

The abandoned vessels were at this juncture played upon by two heavy streams of water from the steam fire engines which had arrived upon the shore.

The "Vesta," which was lashed to the ship where Pryor had been sleeping, was only in flames aloft, and strenuous efforts were being made by her crew to cut her loose. In this task they were aided by two men who had mounted her decks and given the sleeping sailors the alarm. One of the men who was working heroically to succour them was Pryor. The other was a huge man who had first cried fire from

the shore. Though a person of bulky proportions he was powerful in limb and prompt and efficient as a thorough-bred sailor. He saw that the danger was principally from above, and suggested to the captain, whom he well knew, the propriety of cutting away instantly the mizen mast, which was the only one yet on fire.

The captain acquiesced, and the bulky man swung an axe at this task like a veteran woodcutter of the forest.

Presently the mast tottered and fell into the river, the sailors with knife and axe having severed all connecting ropes above.

It was cleverly done, and there was no more fire on the "Vesta." Still she could not swing clear of the burning ship for the reason that the smoke was so dense between the two vessels that the sailors could not get at the iron cables which bound the two together low down on the hulls. Every effort they made in this regard was thwarted by the smoke which drove them back. There was some unaccountable entanglement of chains between the hulls which could not be reached.

Pryor, more fearless than any of the crew, caused himself to be let down through the smoke by a rope about his waist. According to his calculation he found a point near the water where the air was clear of smoke, and with his axe severed a rope which was the real secret, and instantly the "Vesta" parted from the burning ship, and swung out into the stream, saved.

The crew cheered, and hailed the detective up to the deck. At this instant a sail in flames was torn from the top of another ship, and carried by the wind directly upon the deck of the "Vesta," where Pryor and the fat man were standing together and congratulating the captain upon their escape.

The two heroic strangers on the ship were covered by the sail, and their garments took fire.

Before they could be rescued from the folds of the burning sail they were both fearfully burned about the neck and shoulders. Some of the crew poured over them buckets of water, drenching them to the skin, and thus burned and soaked they were carried to beds between decks.

The captain of the "Vesta" having brought his ship to the opposite shore, and secured her, hastened below to look after the two men who had worked so faithfully for the vessel in her hour of peril. He found them stretched upon beds on the cabin floor, and bandaged with oil and cotton. Addressing the man of ponderous proportions, he said:

"You have saved a valuable cargo, Timothy Robust, by giving us timely warning of our danger, and then working so hard to save us. I shall hasten to notify the owner of your instrumentality in rescuing this property and the vessel. Nor shall I forget this brave sailor who is stretched beside you."

"And who is the owner?" asked the suffering Timothy, faintly, for he was badly burned.

"Miss Angelina Lofly," was the response. "She owns both ship and cargo."

Timothy half-started up at this announcement, and then falling upon his pillow said:

"Thank Heaven for that! Perhaps she will now deduct a few inches and come to terms."

Then, realizing that he was compromising his secret by his remark about the inches, he said:

"I think I am raving. I am in such pain that you must not heed what I say. But one thing you must do for me, Captain Rogers."

"Command me, sir, for any service!" was the generous and prompt response.

"You must land me, and then get a carriage to carry me home. I insist upon this gallant sailor accompanying me. I shall see that my sister nurses him until he is well."

"Thank you, Mr. Robust," said the disguised detective beside him. "I hope I won't have to be a burden on your hands long."

"Your wishes shall be attended to in the morning," said the captain. "I will send you both across in a boat, at break of day. In the meantime try to sleep."

With similar words of kindness, he left them in charge of two sailors, and went again on deck.

An entire year had passed since the rescue of the "Vesta," and Pryor was still an inmate of the house of Timothy Robust. The lumber merchant had recovered from the effects of his injuries in a few weeks; but the poor detective, who lay in the adjoining chamber, was stricken with a long and distressing fever, induced by the exposure to which he had been subjected. When the fever at last was broken by the skilful treatment of the family physician, it was found that Pryor's system was completely broken down.

He could not walk, and was forbidden by his host to make any attempt to escape from the house until time had restored him entirely to health. The weary



[BESSIE TRUELOVE'S MISSION.]

months dragged on and found the sister and brother ever at the side of his bed and easy-chair, to administer comfort or speak of hope.

Timothy formed an ardent attachment to the man who had shared the dangers and the credit of the rescue of the "Vesta." Gradually in their intercourse it leaked out that Pryor was no sailor, but the famous private detective, whose exploits had reached the lumber dealer's ears. Step by step respect and confidence mounted into friendship, and at the end of a year Timothy Robust found himself on many an evening, after business hours, sitting beside the detective, and listening to the narrative of crimes and their successful pursuit and exposure. The subject has a fearful and yet intense interest. It is the battle of wit against wit, craft against craft, intellect against intellect.

The detective becomes conversant with the motives which influence the high and low, the educated and ignorant. His vocation brings him in contact with the merchant prince, the banker's clerk, the refined woman, the abandoned and the man who murders with a club. He pursues one course to entrap educated villany and another to detect the crimes of the low cunning.

From the very nature of his profession he is obliged to be an actor, to assume every form of disguise in dress or speech, and to impersonate every character. He must be a fearless man, for he deals with desperadoes, and must frequent their dens and the liquor shops where they gain the inspiration for their desperate deeds. He must assume also the manners of the polished gentleman, and the suavity and ease of manner of the gamblers who attract bankers' and merchants' clerks to their elegant dens. If he is really great in his profession (and some detectives are great) he is a real blessing to the community. Of course his profession may be prostituted to evil purposes like all professions. But he can be crafty and indefatigable and yet preserve an upright heart and an honourable citizenship.

Such an agent of justice was Pryor, the emaciated invalid, who sat beside Timothy Robust in his library, and revealed, after a year of suffering and silence, the object for which he had assumed the sailor's garb on the night the "Vesta" was saved. When, however, in the course of his revelations he disclosed to his friend the fact that he was following the boy, Sam, to convict him of murdering Red Eyed Mag in the shanty, the listener felt his interest deepening. He knew something of that mysterious affair himself, but he held his peace until Pryor had concluded. Then he said:

"The boy, Sam, never murdered that woman."

"Why do you say that?" inquired the invalid.

"For this reason," said Timothy. "On the very night and at the very time you assume that the woman was killed by some slender, sharp-pointed weapon, I passed that shanty in the rain and darkness. I saw a man with a lantern issue from that house with blood upon his garments, and with a fork in his hand. His face was the face of a desperado and a fiend, and his fork would make just such a wound as you have described."

"Can you identify that man's face?" inquired the amazed detective. "Would you know him again if you happened to meet him?"

"Would I know the fiend himself, if I encountered his majesty a second time?"

"I think you would," said Pryor, with a laugh. "Then, Mr. Detective, so certainly would I know the fork-bearer if I saw his face once more. The crimes of his life had marked themselves upon his features. I'd know him. Trust me."

"Let me sketch you a portrait," said Pryor; "and see if you can detect any resemblance in the picture to the man with the lantern and fork."

"Very good," said Timothy, now thoroughly excited, and drawing his chair closer to the invalid.

The detective thus encouraged described a man well known to the police, and believed to have been connected with several murders and swindling operations, but never yet convicted of any offence. His cunning had been his shield always. They never could fix a crime upon him with certainty.

"There is a man about sixty years of age, and five feet nine inches high. His frame is solid, but would not attract attention from any particular corpulency or manifestation of muscular power. His figure, face and hands would indicate a mercantile pursuit, a firmly built gentleman, who spent his days in a counting-house, and used his hands only in work which required a pen. His face is not bronzed by exposure. He is bald on the top of his head, but on each side of the broad baldness is a good sweep of mixed black and gray hair brushed flat toward the front. His forehead is open, high and broad, indicating large powers. His eyes are green, penetrating, and deep set under bushy eyebrows. His nose is a Roman nose, large and thin. His cheeks are sunken and pale. His mouth suggests at once the beak of a bird, the upper lip slightly projecting beyond the lower. The idea one has upon seeing him is this: That man can talk religion to you by the hour while he is planning how to rob you. His gait is quick and nervous. He wears no beard upon his face of any kind. But his eyes are wicked and cruel, and attract attention at once from

the absence of all warmth or sympathy in them. The eyes and the bird-mouth convict him on sight. I will pause here with my portrait. What do you think of it? Did you ever see anything like it?"

Timothy Robust, who had looked often in the detective's eyes while he was speaking, exclaimed:

"That is the man who came up from the shanty with a lantern. You know him then?"

"I know him well," said Pryor, "and have talked with him when he had no idea who I was. That very man has tried to my face to throw suspicion on the boy, Sam."

"Then your strange meeting with Timothy Robust has been of service to you, has it?"

"It has indeed," said Pryor. "I think now that Sam may prove to be a witness. I must track the boy now at all hazards. That is if I ever get my strength again."

"Oh, my dear fellow," said Timothy, "never fear that you will not be all right soon. You are much stronger than you were last week. But tell me, did this man belong to the gang of thieves who frequented that shanty?"

"He must have been conversant with their doings, for he was often at Red Eyed Mag's. They were all on friendly terms with him, for I saw that myself. But I tell you he never could be convicted of any crime. His associates have been sent to various prisons. He always escapes after a brief imprisonment on suspicion. I have fancied sometimes that he had secret influence. He always seems to have more money at command than any of the rest. He eats at first-class restaurants alone by himself and spends money freely in hotels. But he is superior intellectually to any member of the gang, and is capable of doing nicer work in the swindling line. I have thought sometimes that he simply hires them to do ugly work for him and does not share the plunder of their burglaries. But now I must take the clue from you, and watch his conduct and his haunts closely. Do you think I could walk across the room now? Suppose I make the experiment."

The proposition was acquiesced in and Timothy supported the invalid as he arose to his feet and made the attempt. It proved to be successful. Pryor could walk at last. From this hour hope grew bright within him. With care and daily exercise in the comfortable apartments of Timothy Robust the detective saw that he might in a few weeks resume his place in the busy marts of men and take up the threads of his triple search at the point fate had torn from his hand on board the "Vesta."

(To be continued.)





## THE FOOT TICKLER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Evelyn's Plot," "Darcy's Child," "One Sparkle of Gold," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XLVIII.

Thou domicile of crimes! I read no more.  
For I am one who willingly would love  
His fellow friend. Oh! gentle powers,  
Receive me from the courts, polluted lanes,  
From danger's hands, from the fields of war,  
Receive me to your hands.

"A GENTLEMAN, if you please, Mr. Mordant," said Jenkins, entering the small drawing-room where Victor had just conducted his wife, on the conclusion of luncheon, some week or more after their arrival at the Rookery.

"What name, Jenkins? Show him into the library. You surely are not bringing him here, and without permission," exclaimed Victor, angrily, as he detected a figure closely following the butler into the room.

"Excuse me, Mr. Mordant, it is my own doing, without any fault of this respectable domestic," said the stranger. "I preferred paying my visit here since I am really an older friend of this lady than yourself. And, as to the name, I feared it might not be welcome to you, while yet it would not bring me at once to the remembrance of the mistress of the Rookery. And the urgency of my business must plead my excuse for the intrusion."

Victor's lips opened to speak, with a cold reprimand of such insolent storming as it were of their most private seclusion.

But the words were arrested on his tongue by one glance at his wife's ghastly face, which had something too despairing for terror, too rigid for mere agitation in its fixed white agony.

Eustace Villiers, for it was he, gave a quiet, silent sneer at the sight.

"You need scarcely be told that I am speaking truth, Mr. Mordant, I should think. That face is sufficient to prove that I am no stranger to the lady whom you call wife, and that whatever I may have to state is no gratuitous falsehood on my part. That being settled, I may also, perhaps, be prepared to prove that mine can be no intrusion in a house where I am about to become master."

Victor's hand was raised as if to tell the bold speaker to the very earth.

"Man, are you jesting, or do you expect to be shut up in a lunatic asylum?" asked Victor, albeit his tongue was well nigh paralyzed at the sight of his wife's betraying horror.

[BY THE HAND OF GOD.]

"No, there has been too much of that kind of thing already," sneered Eustace. "Only that in that case it was to silence the truth, which you now believe me insane for asserting. But I am too humane after all to prolong your suspense, even though the reality may not be much more pleasant than the apprehension. The matter is soon told. The fact is that the lady you call wife is undoubtedly already pre-engaged in that capacity; although it was but recently that I had the least idea of her continued existence. A rumour of her death had reached me some time after we had been parted from each other; and as she was certainly not the heiress of the Rookery in those days I was not enlightened by the news that Mr. Vyvian's niece had been married to yourself some months since. But a glimpse I caught of her on two occasions satisfied me as to her identity, and it only remained for me to collect sufficient and abundant proof, lest my assertions should be disputed. Celia, have you no word of welcome to your long-lost husband?" he added, turning to the motionless woman, who scarcely seemed to have heard, still less comprehended, the terrible tale.

"Villain!" she murmured. "Miserable! Beware! you may be mistaken yet."

"By no means," he said, coolly. "The matter is far too certain for any such contingency. And you know me too well, Celia, to brave me with impunity," he added, in a lower tone. "There is ample proof; yes, ample. The kind friend who performed the ceremony, and who has been furnished at your expense with lodgings in a lunatic asylum, to which he had no legitimate claim, is now free, and ready to confirm my words. And your devoted servant, in more than one sense of the word, Carlos, the page, can answer that you confessed the whole to him, and gave him means to convey the unfortunate man to an asylum, where his voice might be silenced and his knowledge treated as a raving of a madman. It were useless to resist such a weight of evidence, Celia. Better conciliate me at once, and we will make this gentleman's exile from this agreeable house as easy and luxurious to him as may be consonant with my own rights."

A cold, ghastly smile came over Celia's lips, for which even Eustace could not account, and which gave a vague uneasiness to his dark spirit. She closed her eyes for a few moments, but it was not in unconscious insensibility, for her lips moved and her hands clasped convulsively, though no sound was heard to escape.

Suddenly she seemed galvanized as it were into strength.

She rose from her seat, and approached the spot where Eustace and Victor stood, with the slow, mechanical movement of an automaton.

"Victor," she said, in a cold, unnatural tone, "it is true, too true. I will not struggle longer against my fate, and it will not be long. No, no, it matters not for this brief, brief remainder of my miserable, guilty life. Let him do his worst. It matters not to me, though he may rue it even yet. And listen, listen, my beloved. The folly was done in a girlish moment of insane passion, that soon died away and I—I was driven from him by the artful cruelty of a torture, which, I believe, has been practised by him ever since. Victor, you never loved me I know, I feel it; and I can thank Heaven for what was my bitterest punishment since you will not suffer now for my wickedness and deceit. It will be but freedom from an irksome tie which you have nobly and kindly borne, but which you will one day rejoice in the breaking."

Victor could not reply. He shrank involuntarily from the woman who could be thus wicked, thus lost to all honour and morality in what should have been her innocent youthful days, and yet his heart was too kindly and too chivalrous to utterly cast off and reject one so doomed, and whom he believed to be so devoted to himself. It was indeed a horrible fate she was about to know. Could he abandon her sternly and without appeal to so lasting a punishment as the dark, fiendish man before him would prepare for a helpless victim?

But Eustace interposed ere he could reply.

"Yes, I quite understand all that," he said, sarcastically. "It will be no great trial to him to lose his wife, I daresay; but it may be more to the purpose when he considers the necessary results. He may, perhaps, forget that you are the heiress of this place, and that your husband will necessarily possess what belongs to you. Mr. Mordant, of course it is a very disagreeable idea to us both, but a necessary one. Perhaps the more quickly and the more rapidly it is carried out the better—that is, when consistent with your convenience."

Victor flushed painfully. It could scarcely fail to bring a pang to his breast, even independently of any selfish motive, to feel that the heritage of his ancestors was to pass to that bad, unscrupulous man, that the husband of his Irene was also to claim the sole remaining being who loved him and the domains that should have been his by right.

"Villain," he said, haughtily, "it is simply sacrilege for you to intrude yourself among honourable and even moderately unscrupulous men. There are few, thank Heaven, guilty of such atrocity as to

drag a high-born, pure creature like Irene Delancy into shame and humiliation, even for your infamous greed. And even this poor, erring one should have demanded duty and honour as your wife. Do you suppose there is no power in Heaven or man to punish such crime? Irene's angel spirit is even now calling for vengeance, and will not call in vain."

Eustace smiled slightly at the words. They were but an echo of what Irene herself had prophesied well nigh in her dying moments, and, in truth, he had already some foretaste of their truth; but his hard, unscrupulous spirit prevailed over the whisperings of compunction and fears of vengeance.

"So far as that goes, Mr. Mordant, I can perfectly prove that I had no idea of the existence of this lady, and that she purposely concealed it and herself from me, while openly and deliberately contracting another marriage. And as the late Mrs. Villiers is unhappily deceased I do not suppose she will be brought up in evidence against me. Depend on it I know perfectly well what I am about, my good sir, and if you are wise you will rather compromise matters and try to make everything pleasant than carry on these open hostilities against me. 'Tis butting against a wall to knock off your own head."

"Not so, not so, Victor," interposed the ghastly-looking creature who but now was the wife of a true and honourable man and the heiress of a fair domain. "Do not fear. He has no such power as he believes or pretends. This is not his; no, no, nor mine. He has but obtained a hated and hated victim for a few brief days. He has covered himself with shame and disgrace for naught—naught," she added, impatiently, as if doubting her own firmness and power to conclude her harangue.

"Woman, are you mad?" Eustace exclaimed, angrily, "or do you suppose all are so doing as to be moved about at your pleasure, or to believe your falsehoods?"

Celia laughed scornfully, as if for the moment her own misery was lost in the revenge she was meditating on one so hated and so cruel.

"I ask no credence any more than yourself, Eustace Villiers," she said, calmly, "save for what I can fully prove; and I, like yourself, am bringing on my head degradation and shame in order to fully clear up the past and do justice to the living and the injured, who can still hear the miserable confession. I am not the daughter of Oscar Vyvian. I am a miserable changeling, a substitute, and the impostor that was foisted alike on the brother of the possessor of the Rookery and on himself. The fraud was not one perpetrated by the unfortunate father of the injured girl. He was innocent. The sin was mine, and no other. But it shall be rectified now. You have frustrated your own ends, false man, and you will even yet learn that there is retribution in Heaven, ay, and power on earth to punish your villainy. This domain is not mine—no, nor one shilling of its wealth, not one jewel, one garment that has been purchased by its ill-gotten means."

There was something in her whole look and tone that carried conviction with it, the more especially as she did not even attempt to avert the fate that threatened her.

And even Eustace could only sullenly demand, in a constrainedly taunting accent:

"And pray where are those boasted proofs of your own crime and baseness, Celia? Let us have them at once."

"You shall, you shall!" she said. "But first I will call one who can only too surely confirm the tale."

She pointed to the bell, as if she dared not waste unnecessary strength by the slightest exertion, and Victor silently and sadly obeyed the behest.

"Bid Theresa come," she said, calmly, to the attendant.

In a few brief minutes the woman appeared. Celia walked a few steps towards her, and then, with a sudden impulse, threw her arms round her and clung to her like a frightened child.

"Mother, mother, have pity on me," she said. "Save me. He claims me, the cruel fiend. He has the terrible proofs. Mother, he shall not grasp all. Tell him the truth. Oat him to the quick in the only tender place of his hard, fiend's nature."

Theresa's brow darkened, and for the moment she seemed inclined to repel the suppliant and to refuse her prayer.

But as she gazed at Eustace's dark, sneering features, and Victor's sad, plying face, her mood appeared to change.

"She is right, right for once," she said, sternly. "There is, at least, goodness as well as true blood in him, and if all must be lost, at least the villain shall not have the gain. Victor Mordant, this unhappy one is but too true. She has no claim here. She is the child of an alien, but your uncle had injured her

father—ruined him in fame and fortune—and I, her mother, took this mode of revenging the wrong by substituting his daughter for your true and rightful cousin, the heiress of the Vyvians in blood and in wealth. And this," she went on, "can be proved, if by no other means by the certificate of my own daughter's birth, which took place some five years before that of the true heiress of the race. But I had taken the child to nurse and bring up, and when she was supposed to be restored to her father it was only supposed that the Southern blood of her Spanish mother and the elime had matured her in an unnatural degree. This was all the explanation needed by the father, and when he died there was no difficulty in passing her off in the same manner on her uncle, and in her eventually becoming his heiress as his niece."

Eustace listened in gloomy silence. "And pray where is the true heiress," he said, "the daughter of the Vyvians, who was thus dispossessed of her rights?"

Theresa laughed sarcastically.

"If I did not know her to be guarded beyond your vengeance and hate, I would not tell you one letter of her name," she said; "but, as it is, I am but adding to your punishment and torture. Know, then, that the real heiress of this domain, always excepting some few thousands which are, in truth, the right of this same injured husband of my unhappy girl, is one who once was devoted to you in heart as none ever yet have learned to love your hard, cruel, deceitful nature. She on whom you began the system of slow and secret torture that had nearly murdered her, and has since carried a fair victim to the grave, was, in truth, the niece of Mr. Vyvian of the Rookery, and his consequent heiress. Yes, all unconscious as she was, and in, of her birth, Norma d'Albano, the 'Madonna,' and Celia Vyvian are one and the same, and you have sacrificed the beautiful and gifted and rich to your selfish and base aims."

The spoke in slow, triumphant accents that seemed to hang on every syllable, and, as it were, probing the tortures of her victim.

And he, in spite of his bravado and his pride, could ill conceal the agony of rage and disappointment that raged like a tempest within him.

"Woman!" he exclaimed; "if this be true, it shall be amply revenged: Yes, your daughter will pay for the deception dearly enough so long as her miserable life lasts. I will not be fooled and deceived with impunity. And, first, she shall accompany me from this boasted home to the where she will find a good many less luxuries. I can assure her, than she has managed to enjoy hitherto! Fool, fool," he went on, "that you should not keep the only engine you could wield, that you should thus whet every evil passion, and draw on yourself my just vengeance. But it is your fate, and you must suffer. Come."

He advanced to the spot where the unhappy woman still clung to her mother in despairing misery, but she moved not.

"Come," he repeated. "You have acknowledged my right to command, and that you are an alien here. Come at my bidding, I tell you."

He seized her hand, and the mother, with all her bravery and her despair, could but ill retain her hold of the victim, while Victor hastily advanced between the group.

"Mr. Villiers," he said, "I will not allow this cruelty. It is—"

But the sound of his voice seemed to arouse the unfortunate one.

"Hush, hush! I will go," she gasped.

And with a sudden effort she raised herself from the support on which she had leaned of her mother's arms.

For a few slow steps she went on, like one in a hideous dream, till she came to the spot where Eustace stood awaiting her with fixed eyes and that smile she knew so well.

Then, with a wild tossing of her arms, and a cry of "Save me, Victor, save me!" she fell on the floor, with blood gushing from her nose and mouth in a crimson stream.

#### CHAPTER XLIX.

Put in the eyes of love—sudden sun,  
Taste in the breath of love—eternal spring,  
Could age but keep the joys that youth has won  
The woman's heart would fold its idle wing.  
It change there be in fate and nature's plan,  
Wherefore blame us? It is in time, not man.

The victim had escaped, but, by the quick and indignant vengeance that happily overtook the murderer, Eustace Villiers was still an unwilling inmate of the mansion where the unhappy Celia lay a corpse.

He had fled from the house with a swift and sudden stealthiness that seemed to promise escape, while the attention of the others was engrossed by the dying

girl, who had been his victim as completely as if he had himself stabbed her to the heart.

But the vengeance of Heaven was not allowed to sleep, and the crafty one was taken in his own snare, even when at the very summit of his criminal ambition, which he had, in his proud wiliness, believed to have climbed.

The guilty one fled, even though for the moment no one pursued; and the path he selected, which led into the hidden shrubberies and woods adjoining the private grounds around the house, appeared to afford a certain shelter and escape.

It was not for a stranger to comprehend the intricacies of that hidden retreat; it was not for the man whose life was thus at stake to stop to calculate the chances of the safety he sought.

But ere he had traversed many yards in that tangled plantation a report, an involuntary shriek of agony was heard.

The retreating man had been caught in one of the spring traps that were set for a desperate and lawless set of poachers who were infesting the neighbourhood.

The next moment the contents of the gun had lodged in his side, and the hardened terror of so many helpless innocents was lying in writhing agony on the turf ground; and there, when the search for the fugitive had been made, was the miserable criminal discovered and brought back to the house of death.

"Let him remain; let him know the misery he has wrought," had been the dictum of the mourning mother of the deceased.

And by a cruel irony the miserable man was placed in one of the luxurious chambers he had once coveted, and the most skilled surgeons in the neighbourhood called in to avert the end which to a certain extent the mother appeared to court.

Calm and dispassionate, it was difficult to decide on his real feelings; but so far as the dark brow and stern, brief speech could be interpreted Eustace Villiers rather shrunk from the mere chance of life.

"Let me alone, let me alone," he would say, fiercely. "You only wish to torture me."

And the doctors and the very case-hardened nurse who had been summoned to his call, shrink from the fearful imprecations and the gloomy bitterness of the sufferer.

"He cannot live," such had been the dictum of the surgeons. "There is no actual pain from which any data can be taken. But the mischief is internal and beyond reach of aid. The easier the patient the more alarming is the danger."

And with this ominous assurance they retired from the Rookery.

He heeded not the threatening looks, the half-dropped words.

He guessed something perhaps, but he did not—he would not believe what he could in truth interpret but too well.

His affected desire for death, his proud and cynical contempt of life were fast yielding to the approach of a world he shrank from entering—a judgment that would visit to the utmost his evil deeds.

He had been lying in a species of stupor for some time after the surgeons' departure, and only the spasmodic twitchings of his features betrayed the real consciousness of his soul.

The pain and fever of the body were as a feather's weight to the suffering of his soul; but still his frame lay rigid and motionless beneath the coverlet that gave at once warmth and shelter to the susceptible wound beneath.

There was a light footfall, but he heeded it not. Then a figure approached the bed, and still his eyes remained regardless of the intruded presence till a hand touched his.

"Eustace," whispered a gentle voice, "Eustace!" A quick movement agitated the patient now.

He opened his eyes with a startled gaze.

"Who are you?" he moaned, averting the look.

"I am Norma d'Albano, or rather I was," replied the intruder, gently. "But I am called by another name now. It matters not. You know me, and you once said you loved me, Eustace."

He turned his head impatiently away from the well-known, beautiful face.

"Go, go—leave me. It is your own doing. You would not—you would not—and you might have saved life," he returned, angrily.

The girl did not obey. She stood gazing sadly on the dying man with almost an angel's grief in her features.

"Eustace, there is yet time. Repent and confess," she said. "There are those at hand who have the power to insist on your replies to their queries, or to fulfil their behest for your punishment. And I—I cannot forget I once loved you, criminal and doubly dyed in sin as you are, and I have begged for one last chance to avert your doom here and pray for mercy hereafter."



"And what is that, idiot—miserable idiot that you are?" he almost shrieked, in the agony of mind and body that he suffered. "You have thrown away a golden chance, for I, yes I, can take all—all!" he shrieked. "The paper—the paper! That will tell all!"

"Will it tell all, Eustace?" she said, sadly. "Will it tell your fiendish cunning that brought slow death to some and from which I was only saved by your very eagerness to complete my death?"

"It was a clever device," he went on, sneeringly, as his brains seemed to fever with his increasing pain. "Yes, yes, one that few would have imagined, so safe and so noiseless, and so free from punishment. They should call me the 'Foot Tickler,' oh, Norma, and give me a passport for my discovery."

The girl shivered with the sickening horror of the scene. But even the misery of the scene did not deepen her woman's pity for the being who, sinfully as he was, hovered on the brink of such a retribution for his crimes.

"Eustace, try to calm yourself," she said, firmly. "And the brief space that remains to you may even yet suffice for your repentance and amendment. Oh, it is awful to go into eternity where that unhappy one has but preceded you with the cry for vengeance on her lips. Think what it will be—think of her, of the innocent Irene, and—and—"

"And yourself, I suppose," he said, sneeringly. "You would call down vengeance, I suppose, on me for the sake of all that you suffered." "Yes—yet," he murmured, faintly, as if his force strength was already failing him. "Listen, Norma. You were the only one I ever loved, only when Irene camest was too golden a chance; and then Celia, with her thousand, who was mine—mine, though I had long scorned myself for the boyish folly. Yes, it was too great a temptation, and at least, if they deceived me, they are gone before me, and lost all they held dear. That's pleasant. Only you—you will be rich and happy. It is torture to think of it. Yes, yes. It shan't—it shan't—"

The feverish shudders mounted up fiercely to his brow, his eyes glared with the wildness of insanity, and before Norma was aware, he had sprung up, and, catching her small figure in his arms, dragged her to the window of the apartment.

His hand was on the fastening, and the next moment he would have thrown it open and either flung Norma from the giddy height or himself sprung with her to certain death.

But fortunately for the intended victim the watchful care of one she loved as she had never known real and true affection before was guarding her in her peril.

Her loud, agonized shriek brought Grantley Neville to her side. Yet for a moment it was a doubtful contest between love and hate, which might have, perhaps, ended in a still more painful tragedy worthy of the departing band of that fiend in human shape.

But Norma's voice sounded through the chambers and passages of that vast mansion with thrilling power, and at length the mansion was overpowered and conveyed once more to the bed, which, in a few brief hours, witnessed the last breath of him whose career had dragged so many innocent victims to the grave, about to close over his own guilty head.

It was his last effort at revenge, and Norma Vyvian, as she must now be called, shunned that chamber for many a long month and year as the scene of her own fearful danger and that awful death scene of him she had once loved with all the fervour of a young and Southern nature alone and friendless in the dreary world.

Little remains to be told, save in the brief explanation of the mystery of Eustace Villiers's secret, and the gathering of the threads of the lives that had escaped his ferocious cunning.

It was not without much reluctance and shuddering horror that Norma revealed what from her own experience she doubted not to be the slow process of murdering the victims, and that would have no doubt sent the luckless heiress of the Rookery to a rapid grave, even had she survived the shock of Eustace's reappearance on the scene.

The secret had consisted in inflicting by slow and gradual degrees the agony of foot tickling on the helpless women exposed to his power.

"At first by more playful caprice, as it seemed," she said, "and as a sort of childish means of exciting laughter and inducing a girlish indignation and revenge. But it grew more painful each day that he used to pass with me at Naples, and after he had formed his designs on poor Irene, he hastened the means of shortening my existence, till finding, as I suppose, that I was, in truth, less susceptible and nervous than was consistent with his schemes, he drugged me with some slow though deadly medicine, that only the profound skill and watchful care of dear old Alphonso could have baffled by care and antidotes.

And when that recovered it was at last agreed on between him and Lord Grantley and myself that I should remain in strict concealment till I could burst on the guilty man without bringing shame and sorrow on the sweet Irene. Had he behaved to her with even ordinary tenderness and affection I would have sacrificed my own claims, my own wrongs for her sake. But as it was she escaped that worst blow, and I—I thank Heaven that the bitterest agony of knowing she was not a wife was spared to her."

Grantley Neville looked as if only the presence of Barbara Fitzalan, and the old Alphonso restrained him from clasping the lovely girl to his heart and pouring out his admiring sympathy and affection for her noble endurance and self-denial.

"You have, at any rate, secured the happiness of almost all within the influence of your bright sunshine," he said, warmly. "You do not half comprehend the extent of your beneficence yet. You have not heard of the nature of Irene Delancy's will, nor the actual position in which your cousin Victor is placed from your advent as heiress of the Rookery."

The girl shook her head silently. Her heart was full to bursting with the varied emotions that were swelling up within, and it would have been well nigh impossible for any one, even those to whom she was most dear, to comprehend the contention between opposing emotions in her heart.

But her eyes said far more plainly than words her eager desire to learn all, and Barbara Fitzalan's blue orbs had an anxious trouble in them that Grantley read with an answering sympathy in his feelings.

"Nay, it is not any such very fearful catastrophe," he said, with a witty smile at the fair expectant. "Only this document of the nurse's which had excited that bad man's cupidity, and drew him from my darling, Irene, by some effort that must have cost her dearly, managed to secure the wealth and lands over which she had control from the cupidity of her supposed husband. And Victor Mordant is nearly compensated for any real or imaginary grievance in his share of the will by the bequest to himself of all over which Irene had power—a token of enduring love which will bring consolation to its object long ere the benefit itself has passed from custom on his enjoyment. Is it not so, Lady Barbara?" he added, turning to the earl's daughter.

But Barbara had vanished unperceived, and the good old servant and friend of the young heiress of the Vyvians had wisely followed her example, though more deliberately than the fair young creature thus shrinking from the soft betrayal she could scarcely restrain.

Grantley turned again to her beloved, with a triumphant smile.

"Am I to plead in vain now, Norma? Can you discover any good reasons for delaying my happiness—and, may I not add, your own? Unless, indeed," he added, "you think my poor pretensions are not equal to the lovely and gifted heiress, and give me a dismissal for my presumption."

It is needless to chronicle Norma's reply, save in one brief sentence:

"Not yet, dear Grantley. It is too soon after poor Celia's death; and the scandal would be too widely bruited. Besides which, I have a hope in my heart that her loss may even yet be more than filled up to poor Victor. Barbara's whole heart is his, though perhaps she scarcely even knows the extent of her affection for him, and if we give some space for the healing of past wounds the worst effects of the past miseries may be softened for the living sufferers from that deep-laid plot."

Grantley remonstrated, though with a strong feeling of increased admiration and love for the fair creature he had won.

And after some farther pleading the date of the wedding was fixed for six months from that time, which would afford a most decorous space for mourning.

Yet, though it appeared a weary interval to Grantley Neville, it was pregnant with some remarkable events that justified the wisdom of the delay.

The bridegroom of the celebrated cantatrice—the well-nigh victim of Eustace Villiers—came to the altar under a more distinguished and noble name than he had borne during his wild youth and his fitful courtship.

The Marquis of Belmont was no more. A rapid fever had carried him off in the very flower of manhood, and by his decease not only was the sensitive conscience of the young heiress relieved from the slightest reproach but Grantley was installed in honour and in wealth, which he proudly laid at the feet of her he loved.

Yes, the fair young creature stood at the altar in a glitter of distinction, and hope, and happiness, that she could little have anticipated in her days of sorrow and obscurity.

The heiress, descendant of an old family, the

chosen bride of one of England's peers, and surrounded by a crowd of the most distinguished of the land, Norma stood at the altar beautiful, gilded, brilliant, and yet yielding all with a sweet, feminine humility to the man she had learned to love. The sunbeams glittered in her dark hair, on the priceless gems that her own proud talents had won from royal and noble hands. The dark eyes might have rivalled their lustre in the bright happiness which flashed from their orbs.

And as she knelt before the altar many a mature heart involuntarily pronounced a blessing on their union, and many a younger brain envied Grantley the prize he had won at so sore a risk and patient a courtship. And at her side was another fair and noble girl, speaking her vows with a confident if a chastened love.

Barbara Fitzalan knew well that she was not the first, the spontaneous choice of him to whom she plighted her troth.

Irene's fair image and Celia's pale shade did, perhaps, cast a faint shadow over the maiden gladness of the bride of Victor Mordant. Still it was neither for sadness nor distrust that the tint deepened. It was but the mist that betokens a brilliant day, which hung over the dawn of their married life.

And as it passed away, as Victor realized more perfectly the sweetness and the unselfish purity of her he had chosen, it was the very study of his life to prove to her how deep, and true, and grateful was the sentiment that fairly welled and gushed forth in his nature.

And so convinced was her father of the happiness and established on his child that he finally exerted his influence to procure the remainder of the family title and estates to the disinterested heir of the Vyvians.

Mr. Herries lived only a short time after the release from the lunatic asylum in which he had been confined, albeit he could not but confess in his inmost heart that the punishment had been in a manner a just retribution for his own avarice and his sinfulness towards the unhappy Celia, when he discovered her position and her bondage.

Carlos Montijo disappeared, and after some years of brigandage and lawless excitement in his native land returned to the Rookery to die, where the woman he had so madly and fatally loved had ended her troubled life. His corpse was found lying near the vault of the Vyvians, and next his hand a likeness that she had once bestowed on him as a proof of gracious favour and regard.

Alphonso was an honoured inmate of Norma's house till his death in an extreme old age.

He had saved the lives, alike of his beloved protégée and of the husband of her choice, and they both returned the boon with reverent gratitude. Their children were taught to consider him almost as a foster parent, and their happiest youthful hours were spent at his knees, listening to his tales of the distant land where their parents had run such dangers and been delivered by his wisdom and tenderness.

Jenkins and Laura were married, but with a very questionable result.

The pretty, flirting bride managed to dissipate the ill-gotten gains of her mature husband, and finally to leave him bankrupt in pocket and in comfort for a younger and more attractive man.

Thus, the enemies of the unhappy and erring Celia did not prosper on the spoils they had exacted, while her penitence and her early fate cast a pitying veil over her transgressions.

But for Eustace Villiers, whose early history ever remained in mystery, and whose crimes excited at once a shudder and a hating repugnance to his very name, there was no such indulgence.

Barbarous and cruel in life, he lay in a lone, un-honoured grave, his name ever mentioned with loathing, his plans frustrated, his victims emancipated, and the sole chronicle of his deeds prepared by his disgraceful end. There can be little fear that his crimes will be imitated, or that amidst the various phases that human passion or selfish avarice can desire there will be a repetition of the hideous invasion of torture which marked the career of the FOOT TICKLER.

#### THE END.

A ZANZIBAR letter of the 15th of March, which appears in an Indian contemporary, states that the route from the coast to the interior is again interrupted, the native chief Marambo having twice attacked the Arab traders. The Livingstone Relief Expedition had consequently not started, but was believed to be nearly ready.

THE LECTURER AND THE REPORTER.—A reporter having dined with some friends, attended a lecture afterwards, and favoured the public with the following report: "The lecture last evening was a brilliant affair. The hall ought to have been filled, but we are sorry to say only 40 persons were

present. The speaker commenced by saying that he was by birth an ecclesiastical deduction; gave a learned description of Satan, and his skill in sawing trees. Among other things he stated that the patriarch Abraham taught Ceorops arithmetic. We trust the eloquent divine may be induced to repeat the lecture at some future day." What the lecturer said to the reporter: "Dear sir—In a report of my lecture in your beautiful city you have made some mistakes, which I wish you to correct. You made me speak of myself as by birth an 'ecclesiastical deduction.' What I said was that I was not by birth, but only ecclesiastically, a Dutchman. Instead of speaking of Satan as sawing trees I spoke of him as sowing tares. I said nothing of Abraham, but spoke of the Arabians as nomads of patriarchal simplicity. I said that Ceorops was the founder of Athens, and instructed the people in agriculture."

## THE MYSTERY OF FALKLAND TOWERS.

### CHAPTER XXXII.

Well, he hath often lined his prey, why now  
Should he demur when they have him in toils?  
'Tis biter bit, and nothing more.

*The Dungeon of Daltabury.*

ALTHOUGH Lord Falkland was well assured that Captain Diggs intended playing him false to a certain degree, and had taken measures for his revenge, he was not prepared for the full development of the captain's scheme against him.

The horror which ran through the entire household of Falkland Towers when the particulars of the frightful fate which had overtaken Hawkes, the steward, was not permitted to die away before he again pressed Diggs to the business of the transfer of the Romney estates. The proposed coroner's investigation upon the body of the unfortunate Jane Richards having been relinquished, perforce, on the very morning following the visit to the family vaults, his lordship insisted upon closing the business at once. Diggs consented.

With the exception of the solicitor who had accompanied him from London—and of Lady Florence, of whom he could see but little—the captain appeared to not have a friend in the castle. Turn whichever way he would, he encountered naught but sinister glances and covert scowls. Both his lordship and Madame La Grande still wore their masks of apparent trustfulness, but from behind them occasionally peered forth a cold, deadly hate, combined with an anticipative triumph and exultation which there was no mistaking.

The remaining confederates—Lord Fitz-Grammont, Lady Fitz-Grammont, the countess, and Hugo and Felicia Withers—were more open, so far as manners and facial expression went. But, strange to relate, the whilom keen-witted, swift-sighted Diggs appeared to note nothing whatever of this. He moved among them with the blase confidence of a child, and chatted freely with his lawyer about the business in hand.

On the morning agreed upon his lordship had the great drawing-room of the castle filled not only with his guests but with some of the upper domestics, so eager was he to have every one witness his triumph.

Lady Florence—who had received some intimation of the complete ruin of Ralph Romney—would gladly have absented herself, but his lordship insisted upon her presence, and even Diggs found an opportunity to advise her to be present.

They were all assembled in the drawing-room, and a table covered with writing-materials and surrounded by a number of chairs was at the front end of the apartment. At one side of this table sat Lord Falkland, with several of his friends standing at his side and behind him. Diggs and his lawyer occupied seats at the opposite side, the latter busying himself with cutting some quills into pens, while the gallant captain eyed the company with nonchalant ease.

"Well," said his lordship, impatiently, "where are the bonds and mortgages, captain? There are plenty of people here to witness the assignments. We might as well get through with drawing up what additional papers are needed as soon as possible."

"Mr. Garnish, my solicitor here, has all the papers, my lord," said Diggs, turning to the lawyer.

"Yes, my lord," said the legal gentleman, producing a small blue bag, from which he drew a number of carefully filed documents; "the bonds and mortgages are here, and I also took the precaution to prepare beforehand what additional papers are necessary to complete the transfer. We only await the arrival of Squire Romney."

"Squire—" exclaimed his lordship, forgetting the company in which he was, or perhaps not

particularly caring for it. "What do we want with that bumpkin here? Don't the estates belong to Captain Diggs, and isn't he going to make them over?"

"Undoubtedly, my lord, but, in the contemplated transfers the presence of Mr. Romney is a legal necessity."

"So be it, then," growled his lordship, in a mollified tone. "After all," he added, turning, with a grin, to Madame La Grande and the countess, who sat near him, "we might as well enjoy the discomfiture of the penniless puppy here as elsewhere. Gad! how he will squeal when he finds himself a bankrupt!"

"It will be as good as a play," smiled the countess.

"By Jove, but it will, though," drawled Fitz-Grammont, stroking his moustache.

"But I trust," said Hugo Withers, with mock concern, "you will not permit him to work upon your lordship's feelings—your lordship will not relent?"

Falkland burst into a coarse laugh, in which he was heartily joined by Madame La Grande and the rest.

"I scarcely think there will be any occasion for your lordship to relent," said Diggs, smiling.

"Occasion, or not, be sure I never shall, captain," replied his lordship. "I'll treat him as I would the worm that crawls; and I'm different from most people in that respect. I always go out of my way to tread on worms."

He cast a malignant look at Lady Florence as he spoke. She had sat quietly apart, pale, but collected; but now a swift tremor of the lip showed that his brutal words cut home.

The bell rang at this moment, and Squire Romney was announced. He entered with his usual quiet, manly bearing, and, appearing to take no note of the insulting glances that were thrown at him, merely made a slight bow to Lady Florence, and took his stand behind the chair occupied by Captain Diggs.

Mr. Garnish wrote some lines at the foot of a somewhat voluminous document, filled in a number of blanks, which had been left open, and then spread the last page of the writing flat upon the table.

"Captain, your signature," said he, pointing with his pen to a space at the bottom of the sheet. "It is hardly necessary, Mr. Romney," added he, turning, with a sarcastic smile, to the young squire, "to read the bill of assignment aloud. You are probably already aware of its purport."

"No, it is not necessary, sir," said Ralph, bowing his head upon his breast, and speaking in a feeble, faltering voice, which caused a perceptible titter on the part of the conspirators.

Diggs appended his signature slowly, and with an elaboration of flourish.

"You, Mr. Romney," said the solicitor, dipping his pen in the ink, and tendering it, with a pitying look, "will sign directly under the captain's signature."

Ralph, with his head still bowed, took the pen, and wrote his name with a trembling hand.

"Who will witness these signatures?" asked Mr. Garnish.

"I, for one!" exclaimed Falkland, rising, with his dark features alive with fiendish exultation. "But wait," he added. "Will the name of one of the parties chiefly interested answer as a witness?"

"Your name will answer very well, my lord," said Garnish, bowing obsequiously.

"There it is, then!" cried his lordship; and, leaning down, he inscribed his name with feverish haste.

"One other name is required," said the lawyer.

"My dear cousin Florence, it shall be yours," said his lordship, looking at Lady Florence, with a malignant smile, and then casting a glance of even keener malice at Romney, whose head, however, still remained bowed upon his breast, as if in supreme humiliation.

"I—I would rather not be a witness," faltered Florence.

"I insist upon it," exclaimed Lord Falkland.

She was about to return a haughty reply when her eye caught that of Captain Diggs, when she instantly arose and approached the table.

"I suppose it is of little consequence," said she, taking the pen which Mr. Garnish offered her. But Falkland watched, with unctuous satisfaction, her paleness increase as she wrote her name.

"The business is at an end," said the man of law, folding up the papers, and returning them, with the other documents, to the blue bag. "Mr. Romney," he added, turning to the young squire with much formality of manner, "by the document which has just been signed and witnessed, according to law, all of your estates, including Romney Manor and Romney Park, which had virtually passed into the possession of Captain Diggs, through the liquidation of what are sometimes

termed debts of honour, are now, by free and unconditional deed of gift on the part of said Captain Diggs, returned to your keeping. Here are the bonds and mortgages of your property, sir."

Ralph, who had all along been in the secret, accepted the blue bag with a simple bow; but Lady Florence could not restrain a cry of joy.

As for the consternation which seized upon the conspirators, it was almost indescribable.

Lord Falkland stood for an instant as if paralyzed and then with a howl of rage he hurled the inkstand at Diggs's head. Diggs cleverly dodged it, and it smashed a large pier-glass directly behind him.

His lordship, with his hands clenched and his features distorted like those of a maniac fresh from Bedlam, approached the captain menacingly, followed by Fitz-Grammont, Hugo Withers, and their fellows.

"Stand off!" cried Diggs, the hard lines starting out in his fine face like springs of steel, and his keen eyes gleaming with the still, collected fire of one well used to danger. "I've conquered a dozen such curs as you, and can do so again!"

"Villain! traitor!" hissed Falkland, pausing however instinctively before the stern, determined front that opposed him. "You have betrayed us!"

"Entirely—absolutely!" said Diggs, coolly. "My object from the beginning has been to baffle your infernal schemes against the weak and innocent, and I thank Heaven I have succeeded well!"

"Ay, and worked out your own destruction at the same time!" exclaimed Falkland, growing something cooler as he saw that the Romney property was hopelessly lost to him.

He stamped his foot, and a London policeman made his appearance from the hall, bearing a pair of manacles in his hands.

"Officer, do your duty! There is your prisoner!" cried Lord Falkland, pointing to Captain Diggs, who instantly manifested great consternation, though whether affected or real it would be difficult to say.

Lady Florence, Romney, and the lawyer, Garnish, started back in genuine amazement and concern.

Falkland and his friends, including the ladies, looked on with fiendish exultation.

It was a striking tableau.

"Of what am I accused?" exclaimed Diggs, falteringly.

"Of being John Rivers, the convict, home from Botany Bay—home without leave of absence," said Falkland, chuckling. "Ah, my friends," added he, turning to the company, "if you could only see that fellow with his wig off, and the blonde powder and dye taken out of his whiskers and skin, you would readily recognize him as the same rascal who stood up in the prisoner's dock of the Old Bailey, going on seven years ago, to receive his sentence of twenty years for forging Bank of England cheques. But it is the same rascal nevertheless. Officer, do your duty!"

The Bow Street official closed up to Diggs, and snapped the iron bracelets upon his wrists.

"How well they become you, captain!" said the countess, laughing heartily.

"He seems to have been born to them!" sneered Madame La Grande.

"Quite the thing, by Jove!" mocked Hugo Withers.

"Aw, now I suppose he can have tiger-hunting for a life-time, oh? sniggered De Vavassour.

"Will you take a drink before you go, my dear captain?" said Fitz-Grammont.

Lady Florence and Ralph still remained speechless—the former staring with dilated eyes, as though unable to believe their evidence.

"Well," said Diggs, with a hard smile, like that of the abandoned criminal, "it's fair enough, I suppose. I hope to floor you with aces, and you beat me by a flush hand. I don't squeal, you see. But since the jig is up be generous and tell me how it was done."

"Why, you idiot!" exclaimed his lordship, leaning forward, and shaking his fist under the captain's nose. "I suspected you of playing me false, and had Withers here to follow you up from the moment you last quitted this castle until you entered the Earl of Glenmorgan's residence."

"What do you mean to say that that keen—that excessively keen, sharp-witted fellow who 'shadowed' me all the way to London, was—"

"None other than your humble servant, my dear captain," interrupted Hugo Withers, bowing with mock ceremony, and stroking his moustache coo-cooedly.

"By Jove! but you did it well! You would make a capital detective, Hugo."

"Withers," continued his lordship, "followed you up, ascertained your contemplated treachery, and made sure by the records that you were the escaped convict John Rivers. So, my fine fellow, whether we had succeeded or not in this Romney business—I thought



you would be at least partially faithful in that, in order to get the money I had promised you for your pains—I had this officer, with his warrant ready, to bag you!"

"You're a deep one! Gad! it was well done, if I say it myself."

"Perhaps," said his lordship, drawing himself up and looking about him, not without some genuine concern in his features, "perhaps this rascal will even now have his ridiculous revenge by cooking up some absurd charges against myself. It would be rogue-like to do it."

"Oh, no. I shall make no charges against you at present, my lord," said Diggs, with another hardened laugh. "Shall I accompany you to London, my dear fellow?" he added, turning to the officer in an endearing manner.

"Certainly, captain. The dog-cart is in readiness to convey us to the station, and we will be fellow passengers from there to Newgate."

Lady Florence at this moment regained her speech—recovered from her trance, as it were, and, looking at Diggs in the same, dream-like, uncertain way, she exclaimed:

"Man—captain—speak to me! Is what he" (she turned her finger toward Lord Falkland) "has charged you with the truth?"

"Lady, he has spoken the truth," said Diggs, doggedly.

Mr. Romney sprang forward just in time to support Lady Florence into a fauteuil, for, upon receiving this reply, she had swooned away.

A little later, and the vicious guests of Falkland Towers were standing upon the terrace overlooking the drive, with tongue and feature expressive of mock commiseration; for Captain Diggs was being driven away in the dog-cart, with the Bow Street official at his side and the handcuffs on his wrists.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

Had been of estranging by pangs intense;  
And each frail fibre of her brain  
(As bow-strings, when relaxed by rain,  
The erring arrow launch aside)  
Sent forth her thoughts all wild and wide.

Byron.

WHEN Lady Florence recovered from her swoon she found herself in bed, and suffering with a raging fever. She was also delirious at times, and entirely unaware of what was passing around her.

During her delirium she talked wildly and incoherently of the checkered past, but her disordered mind seemed to be chiefly controlled by a fear of being poisoned. This apprehension also took possession of her during her intervals of reason, as it naturally would, considering her firm conviction that Jane Richards had been poisoned at the hands of Madame La Grande.

When her fever fell broken and her delirium departed, and she lay enfeebled but rational, she was somewhat reassured to find that she had been constantly attended by one of the women who had been sent to her by her godfather. The other woman, she was informed, had been recalled by the order of the Earl of Glenmorgan himself.

She also found that she had been administered to by the doctor, assisted by the sage advice of Doctor Gipsajoker.

The latter still remained a guest at the castle, notwithstanding the treachery which had been displayed by his quondam relative, Captain Diggs. He, the doctor, had already given an earnest of his zeal, in the estimation of the conspirators, in furnishing the suspicious compound whereby the permanent removal of the poor woman, Jane Richards, had been effected; and his extraordinary cupidity, combined with the apathy with which he had witnessed the cloud of adversity gather over Diggs, was also sufficient guaranty for them to take him still more deeply into their confidence.

Lady Florence soon recovered with her usual buoyancy of body and mind.

During the few days of her speedy convalescence she received no visits from either Lord Falkland or Madame La Grande, although they frequently sent earnest inquiries regarding her health. She was extremely grateful to be rid of their presence, and had little to complain of respecting the treatment she received. The single servant left to her by her godfather (whose action in recalling the others she could not understand, though it gave her no alarm), was a staid, close-lipped woman of middle age, who had little to say, but who was singularly attentive in her duties.

At last, feeling her strength sufficiently recovered, Lady Florence dressed herself with care, and signified her intention of going into the drawing-room, and soon afterwards of taking a drive.

Before she had quitted the little sitting-room adjoining her chamber, however, she was intruded upon by Lord Falkland, who was followed into the room by the country doctor and Dr. Gipsajoker.

These scientific gentlemen, while his lordship stood a little apart, proceeded to engage her in a conversation which was rather bewildering to her.

From the topics of the day they glided into subjects of a profounder nature, even touching upon metaphysics and philosophical questions of which she had no knowledge whatever. Her pique was aroused, and she ceased to answer them. She simply regarded Lord Falkland with cold indignation, ascribing the incomprehensible conduct of the men of medicine to some foolish project of his own for the purpose of humiliating her. But the doctors kept up their conversation, and, when she ceased to reply, appeared to mark the effect of their words upon her by the most remarkable scrutiny. They would notice the flash of her eye, the compression of her lips, the colouring of her cheeks, in such a significant way that she could endure it no longer.

"Gentlemen," said she, rising, "I do not understand your learned twaddle, nor do I wish to. You came to my apartments uninvited; oblige me by leaving them now at my express request."

The two doctors looked at each other, tapped their foreheads significantly with their forefingers, and then glanced mysteriously at Lord Falkland, who shook his head sorrowfully, and then regarded the lady with hypocritical commiseration in his looks.

"Why, what mean you?" exclaimed Lady Florence, ever ready to take the alarm of some conspiracy against her. "One would think that you fancied me insane?"

They again shook their heads, smiled mournfully, and again regarded each other and her with mysterious meaning in their looks.

"My dear cousin," at length said his lordship, hesitatingly, but with much assumed kindness in his tone, "I see you are dressed with care. May I ask what you contemplated doing?"

"I intended to order the carriage for a drive, and then to make preparations for returning to London at once."

"A very wise determination, cousin. A drive in the open air cannot fail to do you good. The carriage shall be ready for you in half an hour."

With this Lord Falkland withdrew, followed by the medical gentlemen, and leaving Florence full of vague apprehensions. Nevertheless she bade her maid bring her cloak and bonnet, and descended to the drawing-room.

Here she waited alone, with considerable impatience, until the carriage was at last announced. Beside the coachman, on the box, was Dr. Gipsajoker. At a loss to account for this, she started back in still greater surprise when, the door of the carriage being opened to her, she perceived that the interior was occupied by Madame La Grande and the Countess of Arundel. Indignant, she was about to return to the terrace, when Lord Falkland, who stood directly behind her, seized her by the shoulders and thrust her forcibly into the carriage.

The door was slammed to with a snap, the coachman snapped his whip, and the wheels were trundling rapidly over the gravel, before she recovered from the shock of her forcible entrance.

Her first impulse was to scream, but she controlled herself by an effort, and glanced indignantly at the two women who sat opposite to her, and who looked upon her with hypocritical kindness.

"Can you tell me what is the meaning of this fresh outrage? What is the new plot against me?" she exclaimed.

"There is no plot against you, my poor child," said Madame La Grande. "This drive is for your own good, and it was deemed best that we should accompany you in your—your present mental condition."

"My present mental condition?" repeated Lady Florence, while a new and horrible fear suddenly darkened over her soul. "Merciful Heaven! you don't deem me crazy?"

The countess and Madame La Grande exchanged a faint smile.

"Don't disturb yourself, my poor dear," said the former, cheerfully; "you will find that everything we shall do for you will be for the best."

Lady Florence buried her face in her hands and sobbed as if her heart would break. She felt herself once more in the toils of her heartless persecutors. Her godfather had apparently deserted her, or been deluded into the belief that her troubles were at an end. Captain Diggs, once her shrewd, intelligent friend in need, was a self-confessed criminal and a prisoner in chains. She could have no communication with Ralph Romney, who would have laid down his life for her. Her enemies had triumphed, and she was at their mercy.

The recollection of her station, and the dignity pertaining to it, returned to her, however, and she dried her tears and endeavoured to compose herself.

As she did so the carriage drew up to a slower pace, and she was aware of two ill-looking men

walking on the roadside upon which she looked. They were dressed something after the manner of country bailiffs, carrying each a heavy staff in his hand. As the carriage slowly passed these men she heard them spring up and take their position behind the box, and then the horses were instantly whipped up into augmented speed.

It was now only by the utmost effort of her volition that she could master the outward expression of her fears, but she succeeded in doing so.

As the carriage swept into that portion of the road that ran along the verge of the sea it again proceeded so slowly as almost to come to a standstill. Florence turned sick with terror as she looked out of the window, for below and before her, stretching far away, lay the hideous quicksands, quivering and gleaming in the misty light, and she felt sure that the carriage was about to halt upon the very spot where the masked assailant had attempted to cast her into the deeps.

But no; again the carriage moved swiftly on and the borders of the sea were soon behind.

"Never mind; when we pass through the village I shall shriek for help," thought Florence. "I know the villagers love me, and will come to my assistance."

But they did not pass through the village. The carriage turned into an almost neglected road, that made a short cut across the neck of the peninsula upon which Falkland village was situated to the continuation of the marshes on the farther side.

The neck of the peninsula was soon crossed, and Florence saw that the road was leading them directly across the foggy marsh-land toward the sea. A little turn of the road gave her a momentary view of the broad expanse. She could judge the locality of the far-sea-line by the increased density of vapour hovering along its verge. One building alone relieved the dreary monotony of the smoking flats. That was a large, square-looking structure that loomed out, grimly and prison-like, from the seafogs. Another turn in the road quickly shut it from her sight.

Florence was now a number of miles from the castle—twelve or fifteen she judged—and in a locality with which she was entirely unacquainted.

She looked at the two women who sat opposite to her. She already knew them to be wicked and heartless, and now they were whispering together, with occasional glances in her direction of such sinister significance as to greatly increase the apprehensions with which she was already well nigh distracted.

The carriage at length drew up upon a gravel space which had been reared upon the soft spongy turf of the marshes and, the door being opened, Lady Florence alighted, followed closely by her companions.

She looked about her in a bewildered, frightened way. She was before the portals of the square-looking, isolated structure she had caught a glimpse of when first entering upon the marsh. Its walls were pierced with tall, narrow, slit-like windows, which were grated and barred with iron. The door was also small, deeply set in the masonry, and crossed with longitudinal strips of iron. Now and then sounds like muffled screams and curses came from within.

A terror that she had never experienced—that she had never imagined before took possession of Lady Florence, and for an instant she stood transfixed. Then, regaining voice and motion, and hardly knowing what she did, she fled like a deer along the marshes toward the beating sea, giving utterance to piercing shrieks as she fled.

The two men who had got up behind the carriage on the road sped after her, and quickly overtook her. They gagged her, and dragged her back in their strong arms.

The unfortunate young lady lost her senses for a brief period; but when she recovered them she was the lonely occupant of a small prison-like apartment. The walls were bare and rudely white-washed. The furniture consisted of a small iron bedstead, a small iron chair, a small iron washstand, supplied with a metal basin and pitcher, the latter filled with pure water, and a small iron table, upon which were placed some broken bits of bread and cheese.

At first she scarcely believed the evidence of her senses. That she, the whilom petted scion of a proud and noble race, the child of elegance and luxury, should thus find herself the inmate of a dungeon scarcely fitted for the meanest of her sex seemed like one of the gloomiest developments of a hideous night-mare rather than a phase of actual existence; and she passed her hands wanderingly over her brows and temples as if in the belief that the frightful vision must vanish, and show her once more her own pure life with its beauty and hope and bloom. But no, the terrible truth was before her. And now there arose upon her startled ears, more distinctly than she had heard them upon first alighting from the carriage, the frightened screams

and wrathful curses of those who occupied similar cells to her own around her.

Still, even in this deplorable position, Lady Florence was brave and strong enough to rise above the pressure of the horrors encompassing her.

"They shall not break me down if I can help it," she murmured, clenching her teeth. "I shall strive to be calm and strong, until death releases me from this life which has proved to be nothing more than a shroud to my weary soul."

She heard voices outside the door of her cell. The next moment a key grated in the lock, the door opened, and Madame La Grande and the Countess of Arundel entered, the door being instantly closed and locked behind them.

"My dear child, I am glad to see that you have recovered from your foolish swoon. How do you like your new quarters?" said La Grande, who was really surprised to see the calm and collected manner with which the prisoner received her.

"Where am I?" asked Lady Florence, in a hollow voice.

La Grande laughed. The mask which she had worn had fallen from her face, and displayed the fiendish glee that distorted its comeliness. Neither was there visible a spark of pity in the face of the countess, who appeared to study the hopeless prisoner as she would have scrutinized the lineaments of some rare specimen of zoology.

"Where are you?" mocked La Grande, throwing back the little curtain that concealed the one iron-barred window of the cell. "Look out, and judge for yourself, my dear!"

Lady Florence glanced out of the narrow casement, which looked across a court-yard, upon another wall, pierced with narrow, barred windows similar to her own. Glaring out from several of these windows, and clenching the bars, like poor animals striving to rend their cages asunder, were poor, half-dressed, hollow-eyed, semi-starved beings in various styles of insanity.

Upon seeing the strangers they set up a horrible tumult, gibbering idiotically, or pointing their fingers, and screaming in frenzied exultation. Most of them were women, but high up in the wall there appeared the rough figure of a man, who, though frightfully emaciated, appeared to be perfectly sane, and he also seemed to listen with horror to the ravings around him.

Now and then might be heard the heavy tramp of a man passing among the cells, accompanied by coarse oaths, and a sound as of a lashing whip; and at such times the screams of the poor idiots were appalling to listen to, and they dashed themselves against the iron bars like frightened birds.

"Great Heaven!" murmured Lady Florence, falling back from the horrible sight, sinking into the iron chair, and burying her face in her quivering hands. "Do I dream? Am I mad?"

"Not quite yet; but you soon will be, my dear," said Madame La Grande. "This is a private madhouse. Some are brought here for being mad, and others to be made mad. The latter is the object in your case."

There was something so absolutely cruel and deadly in the woman's tones that they aroused Florence out of her stupor to a sort of wondering curiosity. She looked up, as if to see what it was a fiend, or really a woman, who spoke.

"Woman, you have never done me aught but wrong," said she, with tremulous dignity; "and I have never done you any ill in return. What can be the motive of your malice towards one so unoffending?"

"Hear the chit!" exclaimed Madame La Grande, turning, mockingly, to the countess, and pointing scornfully at poor Florence. "She would put on her aristocratic airs even in the Marsh Madhouse! Hate you!" she added, changing her tone to one of condensed fury and malignity. "Why do I hate you, you ask? Because you are the type of a purity and innocence I never knew; because you would presume to place your virtue above my sin. And now I'm filled with joy—with supreme, indescribable joy—that my hate has triumphed over you at last! Come, countess! let us no longer intrude upon the boulevard of this fine lady!"

The countess laughed at the cruel mockery, and together they swept out of the cell, the heavy door closing behind them as they withdrew.

The poor captive sat motionless where she had fallen, with her face buried in her hands, and striving to think.

She was momentarily aroused by hearing two voices consulting outside the door which had just been closed. The voices were not loud, and the door was of heavy oak, but she heard them distinctly, and recognised them as belonging to Madame La Grande and Doctor Gipsajoker.

"Now, doctor," she heard the former say, "I leave this matter of procuring an attendant for the special charge of our little patient within here entirely to your charge. I have secured this

privilege through the influence of Lord Falkland. We learned that the regular attendants in the female wards were compelled to use some sort of humanity at times, and therefore resolved to get a special virago for this special occasion."

"Madame," replied the slow, methodical voice of Doctor Gipsajoker, "in a few hours after your departure, you may depend upon it, our little lady here will be in the especial charge of an old woman who will either drive her mad, or into her grave, in the briefest space of time imaginable. Leave everything to me."

"I shall do so, doctor, and report the job to Lord Falkland as already virtually accomplished."

Lady Florence heard a few more words, as if the doctor was wrangling about money that he was to receive upon the spot, and then the voices grew too indistinct to be understood.

She listened to them, however, until they died away, in a dreamy, uncertain way. Then, overcome by fatigue, the terrors of her actual position, and the exhaustion occasioned by her recent swoon, she fell into a slumber so profound as to more resemble death than sleep.

(To be continued.)

## LADY CHETWYND'S SPECTRE.

### CHAPTER XXXVII.

ON arriving at the London Bridge terminus Gilbert Monk alighted from the first-class carriage he had occupied with young Lady Chetwynd and Mrs. Crowl on the journey up from Eastbourne, and raising his hat to them as to utter strangers, he crossed the platform and entered a Hansom cab, bidding the driver convey him to an hotel in Piccadilly.

Flack appeared from a second-class carriage near at hand, and escorted Lady Chetwynd and Mrs. Crowl to a four-wheeled cab, assisted them into the vehicle, mounted the box with the driver and gave the same order Monk had given.

An old bent woman, in a black alpaca gown and a heavy Scotch shawl, wearing an old-fashioned scullie bonnet and a heavily embroidered black lace veil, from whose side peeped out a stray lock of coarse gray hair, and carrying a blue cotton umbrella and a carpet bag—the Hindoo ayah cleverly disguised—had appeared from the second-class carriage adjoining the compartment occupied by Lady Chetwynd, had heard the order of Flack, and now entered a cab and gave precisely the same order.

In the course of an hour thereafter the three several parties were comfortably quartered in the same quiet family hotel. The hour was late, and Gilbert Monk did not see Bernice again that evening. The Hindoo woman registered a false name, and ascertained that Lady Chetwynd was registered as Miss Gwyn of Carnarvon.

This discovery afforded the ayah food for thought and speculation throughout the remainder of that night.

The next morning, after eating a solitary breakfast in the coffee-room of the hotel, Gilbert Monk ordered a cab, and went up to Lady Chetwynd's private parlour to inquire if she were all ready for departure.

Mrs. Crowl gave him admittance. He had expected to find Bernice in travelling attire, with her hat and gloves on. He found her lying upon a couch near the window, in her travelling dress, it is true, but with her hair unconfined, her face pale and wearing an expression of physical suffering. Her white brows were contracted in pain, and she was manifestly unable to travel.

Monk gave a start of dismay. "What is the matter?" he demanded, in an undertone, pausing just inside the threshold, and regarding the young girl.

"Miss Gwyn ought not to have left Eastbourne last night," replied Mrs. Crowl, in a low voice. "Her wrist is swollen and painful. The cold bath she received the night before last was a severe shock to her. She is feverish—ill."

Gilbert Monk smothered the imprecation that arose to his lips. He knitted his brows as he came forward, forcing himself to speak gently, and bent over Bernice, whose long eyelashes lay on her white cheeks. She looked up as he came close behind her, and gave him one hot white hand.

"How is this, Bernice?" asked Monk, affectionately. "Has your high courage given way at last? Or are you really ill?"

"I am only weak and tired," said Bernice, wearily. "I have lived in constant excitement for weeks, you know, Gilbert, and this is the reaction. I am nearly worn out. The chill and damp of that cold and lonely garret at the park seem to have penetrated to my vitals. And I have not had proper nourishment to keep up my strength, and a flush arose to her cheeks. "I am not ill, I think, Gilbert, only tired, as I said, and very weak. I want to rest."

Her eyes again drooped wearily. Monk looked grave. He saw that Bernice was suffering the reaction of her long excitement and anxiety, and that she was really, if not dangerously ill. He saw also that she was unable to undertake the long, hard journey to Mawr Castle at present.

"What is to be done?" he asked, in a tone of perplexity. "Shall I send for a physician, Bernice?"

The young marchioness shook her head, signifying a negative.

"She needs a day of rest, with warmth and stimulating food," said Mrs. Crowl. "I can treat her as well as a physician could, Mr. Monk. I'll have her ready to start for Wales in a day or two—only leave her in my hands."

As Monk could not do otherwise he reluctantly acceded to Mrs. Crowl's demand. He went out and dismissed his cab, and unannounced at the office of the hotel that he should prolong his stay a day or two farther. He then returned to Lady Chetwynd's parlour, with a parcel of morning papers, resolved upon making the best of a bad situation.

In the evening, after eating his dinner in the coffee-room, Monk returned to Lady Chetwynd's parlour. The gas was lighted here, and the curtains were drawn. The fire burned cheerily on the hearth, and before it sat Bernice, still pale, but with a brighter look on her proud, dark face. She looked stronger, too, than in the morning, and greeted Monk with a smile.

He was delighted at the change in her, and sat down near her, his face beaming.

"I feared you had retired," he said, "but you are almost well again, Bernice. Mrs. Crowl is a physician as well as nurse. I am persuaded that you will be able to continue your journey in the morning."

Mrs. Crowl appeared from the inner room, attired for the street.

"I suppose we are to go on to the castle to-morrow, Mr. Monk," she said, "and I have a few purchases to make in town, so I must make them to-night. Miss Gwyn was not so weak as I feared. Her wrist is better, all the inflammation being gone from it, and she is quite able to travel. I shall be back in an hour, having only to go into Oxford Street, if Miss Gwyn will kindly allow me."

Bernice gave assent, and Mrs. Crowl departed.

"Gilbert," said Bernice, hesitatingly, "I've been thinking to-day, during my few waking hours, of how strangely I am situated. You tell me that, having apparently died, and having actually been buried, I have ceased to be Lord Chetwynd's wife. You have been very kind to me, Gilbert. You have saved my life twice; you have given me rare opportunities for improvement; and have been a noble brother to me. Roy will marry Sylvia soon, and I am left utterly alone, with no future to look forward to. I can never hope to reward you for your goodness to me. I am a helpless burden upon you, and I know that you are poor. I cannot consent to be a burden to you longer."

"What do you purpose doing?" "I have no farther interest in England. I want to go somewhere where I have at least a shadow of a claim upon some one. It is April, Gilbert, and ships can visit St. Kilda. I want you, as a last favour to me, to procure me passage to my old island home."

"And what will you do there?"

"I shall be with my dear foster-parents, Gilbert. They will gladly take me back again. I am not the wild, gay young girl they knew. I can teach the parish school now; I can nurse the sick, and visit the villagers, and live a life of usefulness, and in time, perhaps, I may grow content."

Monk's face grew sober, even to sadness.

"You have no home at St. Kilda now, Bernice," he said. "I don't know how to tell you, but it is better to say the truth at once. Mr. and Mrs. Gwellan were both drowned at sea last month, on a voyage from St. Kilda to Glasgow. It was in all the papers—a sad affair."

He paused, affrighted at the dead whiteness of the girl's face, and at the wild look in her great brown eyes.

"Dead!" she said. "Drowned?"

"Yes, Bernice. It was a terrible accident. The boat—a fishing craft—went down in a gale, with all on board."

"Dead! Drowned!" repeated the low, piteous voice, with its wild strain of incredulity. "Dead! Oh, Heaven!"

The girl covered her face with her hands, and was motionless and dumb in her great horror and despair. Monk did not dare break the silence. He had expected tears and moans, and was awe-struck and frightened at the manner in which Bernice had received the fatal news.

The slow minutes wore on. Bernice lifted her head at last, and turned toward him her white, anguished face, and her eyes full of a brooding horror. She had



shed no tears, and Monk trembled as he looked upon a grief so mute, so terrible.

"They are all gone now," she said, in her broken voice. "All gone! Poor father and mother. They are happy in heaven. It is better so. I would not have them back."

"Mr. Gwellan was afflicted with heart disease, and was on his way to Scotland to consult a physician," said Monk, soothingly. "He could not have lived much longer at the best. They have sent out a new minister to St. Kilda, and you would find no place there."

"Is there a place anywhere for me?" asked Bernice, brokenly. "I have no right to any name, no home anywhere. I am only a dependent upon you. I did not mind that, Gilbert, when I expected to go back to Roy, and to have means to repay you, at least for the money you have expended upon me so generously—but now I cannot be dependent longer. If I have ceased to be Roy's wife I have ceased to be your sister. I shall no longer be a dead weight upon you. I must support myself. I must earn my own living."

"You! Why, you are a mere baby in worldly knowledge."

"It is time I advanced beyond that point. You have had me instructed by an accomplished French governess, and I know I am quite capable of taking a situation as governess. I have not come to any decision yet; I could not decide, of course, without consulting you, Gilbert, but I must earn my own support henceforth."

"I can never consent to that, Bernice, never. I have a right to watch over and maintain the life I have twice saved."

Bernice's despairing face flushed a deeper red.

"There is another thing. I do not like to speak of it," she faltered, "but Mrs. Crowl implied that the world would think ill of me for being supported by one upon whom I have no claim. And, though I am not Roy's wife, I shall always, while I live, act as if I were his wife. No one shall say at me, even though they cannot know what I mean, that I am, All I have left is my self-respect, Gilbert, and that I must maintain. You must not blame Mrs. Crowl. I asked her the question that impelled that answer. To be perfectly frank with you, my French governess has repeatedly asked me what relationship I bear to you, and has as often told me that, if I were not your relative, nor a young lady of fortune under your guardianship, I ought to leave your protection, for my very name's sake. And so, Gilbert, I am not going back to Mawr Castle. I want you to crown all your obligations to me by letting me remain here at this hotel with Mrs. Crowl, until you can procure for me a suitable situation."

"You are surely wild, Bernice. You are ignorant of the world and its wickedness; you are endowed with a rare and glorious beauty that might prove fatal to a governess, or one thrown upon her own resources, and you are too young to battle with the world. Your French governess could have been better employed than filling your mind with such old-foggy superstitions. If you had been rich, and my ward, your stay at Mawr Castle would have been eminently proper. As you are not rich you must refuse the guardianship, shelter and home made absolutely necessary to you by reason of your friendlessness. Bernice, I shall not consent to this absurd scheme of self-support. You shall be my sister and ward, and I shall not let you go from me. Let us drop this perplexing subject for the present. We will talk it over hereafter. Let me now advise you to retire to your bed."

He arose, took her hand and felt her pulse. It was throbbing fiercely with feverish quickness. He feared to excite her with farther discussion, and to strengthen her new resolves by combating them. After a few remarks, therefore, on indifferent subjects, and an expression of sympathy in her bereavement of her foster-parents, Monk took his departure.

He closed the door behind him softly, and went downstairs and out into the street.

He lighted his cigar and strode onward with the crowd through Regent Circus into Regent Street.

On being left to herself Bernice's thoughts reverted to her foster-parents, and the tears that had refused to fall before fell now in a heavy rain. Dead!—Drowned! The awkward, shambling, kindly old minister who had trained her in his Puritan habits of thought, who had taught her to scorn an untruth, to love the right—the dead! Why, how would his rude and humble parishioners live without his kindly, gentle teachings? And Mrs. Gwellan, the gentle, meek old lady—a lady in truth—who was refinement itself, whose life was bound up in her husband and foster-child, and who had made a happy home for them even on the barren rock of St. Kilda, she too was dead and drowned under the white sea-waves! Bernice sobbed now in an utter abandonment of grief.

The violence of her grief soon exhausted her. Pale, and with short, sobbing breaths, she lay back in her chair like a flower nearly beaten out of life by some fearful storm. And as she lay there the door softly opened, and an old woman in a rusty alpaca gown, a scuttle bonnet, with a lock of gray hair streaming out from it, and a heavy black lace veil over her face, slowly and silently entered the room, closing the door behind her.

This old woman as the reader knows was the Hindoo ayah.

#### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE old East Indian ayah's disguise was perfect, since none of her natural traits were visible, and Bernice could not have detected under it her mortal enemy.

It must have been then some subtle instinct that warned young Lady Chetwynd of the near presence of danger, or perhaps her very weakness and defencelessness made her suddenly suspicious of intended harm.

Whatever the reason she rose up swiftly and silently, and retreated a few steps toward the door of her bedroom adjoining, her big brown eyes dilating, and her white face, under all its calm bravery, indicating a quick, spasmodic terror.

"This is a private room, madam," she said, with a gesture toward the door, endeavouring to speak quietly.

The disguised ayah came a pace nearer. Something in her stealthy movement, like the springing step of a tiger, reminded Bernice of the Hindoo woman.

The young marchioness made a farther retreat.

"If you do not withdraw immediately," said her ladyship, "I shall ring this bell."

The ayah fumbled in her pocket and drew forth a soiled scrap of paper on which some words were written. The paper was evidently intended to represent a begging letter, and Rague evidently expected to pass for one of the mendacious tricks who steal into hotels and intrude upon lodgers. The woman's hand was gloved, but the ayah's shawl slipped back, and a line of black wrist was seen for an instant above the gray cotton glove.

In an instant, with the rapidity of thought, Bernice's suspicions of evil took shape, and she knew her visitor under all her disguise.

It required all her self-control to conceal that sudden knowledge and to preserve a calm, unmoved face. Yet so great was the horror that crept over her that she dared not betray that knowledge.

"What do you want?" she demanded. "I do not wish to see your paper. Speak!"

The old ayah mimicked incoherently, to signify that she was dumb. Then she moved toward young Lady Chetwynd, extended the paper as she did so, and Bernice's sharpened vision caught the gleam of a glass vial in the woman's hand.

The young girl had conceived an awful terror of the stealthy Hindoo. She knew that the woman had followed her up to London with intent to kill her. And on the moment, as the woman thus approached her with the extended document, the girl sprang back into her own room, and closed the door and bolted it in a panic of affright.

The act announced to the Hindoo ayah that her identity was discovered.

Hissing an imprecation in her own tongue, she moved toward Bernice's door as if to batter it down. Her habitual caution asserting itself, she comprehended that she could do nothing; that the girl being forewarned against her, was armed; that Bernice had but to ring her bell to bring servants to her aid; and that, in short, as she was discovered, nothing remained for her but retreat.

She made that retreat immediately, slipping back to her own room, and leaving the door ajar.

She had barely thus hidden herself when she heard a rustling sound in the corridor and beheld from the gloom of her darkened room the powerful figure of Mrs. Crowl, as that person, laden with parcels, passed into Lady Chetwynd's parlour.

"I had as fine a chance as one could wish," muttered the old woman, "but the girl is as keen of scent as a blood-hound. How did she know me under this disguise? Had I but been near enough to her to dash the contents of this vial in her face, she would never have been able to tell who had visited her! And, more, her face would have been so disfigured that no one could ever have identified her. There are ways enough in which I might destroy her without seeing her, but there would be an ingrat, and the truth might come out through her resemblance to Lady Chetwynd—her own self. No, I mean to do so slowly that not a breath can be uttered that will stay my mistress's marriage with Lord Chetwynd. I mean that she shall carry her beauty with her," and the old woman smiled grimly.

In the course of a few minutes Mrs. Crowl came out into the corridor and looked up and down its dim length, as in search of Bernice's visitor. Then she went back into Lady Chetwynd's parlour, and the listening ayah heard her double lock the door.

There was no summoning of servants, no noise, no excitement. It was quite evident that Bernice did not wish to make public the story of the malignant and threatening visit she had just received.

"She is wise in her generation," thought the East Indian. "If she don't make any outcry, no one will ask who she is, or inquire why she should have an enemy. 'The least said is soonest mended,' eh, my lady?"

It was true that Bernice had told Mrs. Crowl of her sinister visitor, but both supposed that the Hindoo woman had quitted the house, and they did not consider it wise to raise a futile alarm.

Bernice went to bed and Mrs. Crowl sat up to acquaint Monk with the fact of the Hindoo woman's visit.

Gilbert Monk was passing the door on his way to his own room about ten o'clock when Mrs. Crowl, recognizing his step, went out and called him into Lady Chetwynd's parlour. She told him of Rague's visit, and he listened in horror and amazement to the recital.

"It seems, then," said Monk, "that the old Hindoo has discovered Bernice's assumed name. She must have followed us up from Eastbourne to this very hotel. She means death to Bernice. We must watch our charge. We will leave London in the morning, and we must contrive to throw that old woman off our track. If she were once to know the way to Mawr Castle, Bernice would never be safe. She would come upon Bernice there at some unexpected moment and kill her. This is a bad business. I am uneasy—afraid."

He went to his own room with a gloom upon him that he could not shake off.

Meanwhile Bernice, alone in her own bed-room, was not asleep. She was thinking. She reviewed in detail all the events of her short life. She realized her desolation. She said to herself she was forgotten by all who knew her on earth as Bernice Chetwynd.

She shrank from living longer dependent upon Gilbert Monk. What then? She must earn her living some time; why not begin at once? She was fully competent to instruct children; why should she not do so? She could not return to Mawr Castle, and Monk would not consent to allow her to leave his care. She must then, if she intended to help herself, go away secretly. Where would she go? To London naturally, for there, in a wilderness of human beings, she would be safely hidden. And no opportunity would be afforded her for a secret departure like the present. She was now in London, and had but to wait out of the hotel quietly and she would be in the midst of a great, teeming population. Amid the world of workers she was sure she would find something to do.

And then Bernice thought of old Rague with a sickening terror. She was persuaded that the Hindoo woman meant to hunt her to the death. And sorrowful as was young Lady Chetwynd's life, she was affrighted at the thought of a death by violence. The word murder sent a thrill of awful horror to her very soul. In stealing away from those she believed to be her friends Bernice believed that she would also escape from the one she knew to be her enemy. She began to be in haste to be gone.

At daybreak Bernice was up and dressed. Mrs. Crowl had not visited her during the night, and was now sleeping heavily in her own room on the other side of the parlour.

Bernice had put on her travelling costume, her only outer garments at command. Her little bag had been packed by Mrs. Crowl for travelling.

She put on her hat and then sat down at her window.

She waited till the tide of shop girls began to move along Piccadilly toward Regent Circus, and then, with her heart throbbing wildly, she arose and unlocked her door, and stole into her private parlour, bag in hand.

She could hear Mrs. Crowl breathing heavily. She crossed the floor and let herself out into the corridor.

Gilbert Monk was sleeping in his room, and old Rague was also asleep in her chamber opposite, unsuspecting of the fact that her prey was escaping her. Bernice glided down the stairs unperceived. She passed in the lower hall.

The door at the private entrance was open, and a boy was engaged in scouring the stone steps.

As Bernice appeared he staggered out into the street to speak to a passing shop-boy, and young Lady Chetwynd passed out at the open door into the street unchallenged.

(To be continued.)



### THE GAME OF HEARTS.

It was an elegant room in an elegant mansion. Soft lace curtains, with rich crimson drapery, mellowed the light, which was reflected in ten thousand scintillations from the long, polished mirrors. The delicately tinted walls were hung with fine engravings, and, on artistically carved brackets, were statuettes of the prominent men of the day. Articles of vertu, rare and costly, were scattered here and there in lavish confusion.

Beautiful as was the cage, it was none too good for the singing bird that inhabited it.

Verona, sweet, charming Verona, whose voice and eyes had unconsciously broken so many hearts, whose presence, so queenly, was the envy of all her sex! Verona, the orphan millionaire, before whom so many fortune-hunters had knelt, and repeated in vain their soft falsehoods! Verona, whose heart had at last surrendered before the glances of a young doctor whose patients could be counted on his fingers!

But no one knew it; the time for wonderment and gossip had not yet arrived.

Standing near one of the windows, with her jewelled hand resting on the sash, Verona saw a well-known form coming up the street, and, turning, she took a hasty survey of herself in the mirror. Yes, the golden hair was in place, the blue eyes were bright, the satin cheeks were tinted with a healthy glow.

"He dreams not that I love him," she murmured, her bosom rising and falling beneath its silken bodice. "But he loves me—I can see that. He dares not speak, because I am so much richer than he. Ah! if he knew how weary I am of adulation, and how beautiful to me is truth, though it come in rags. At times I have seen his eyes upon me with the yearning that his lips dare not utter, and then it seemed as if I must tell him how dear he was to me. But he must speak soon—he cannot live in suspense much longer. Hush. Who comes?"

"Practising theatricals, dear?" said a sweet voice at the entrance, and then a clear, cold laugh followed.

"It is you, Cousin Mena! Pray where have you been all the afternoon?"

"In my room, writing to somebody, Verona. I've only come down to get a stamp, and then I'll run away, for somebody is coming to see you I perceive."

And the girl's black eyes were fastened for an instant upon Verona's features. Verona paid no heed to her words, but took a stamp from her wallet, and passed it to her cousin with a slight smile.

### [VERONA PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE.]

The latter playfully offered a penny in payment, and, on one pretence and another, managed to detain herself in the room until Gerald Combermere was shown in. Her eyes scanned covertly his every look and motion, and when she saw with what tender deference he greeted Verona her lips came together and a red spot appeared on each cheek. The expression lasted but an instant, however, and then her face was all sweetness again. Presently she arose and, excusing herself, left the room.

For a few moments after Mena's departure Verona and her visitor conversed on the current topics of the day; after which they made a tour of the room, and looked at the pictures for the ten-thousandth time. Presently an awkward pause ensued, during which, Gerald fell into a fit of abstraction. Then, suddenly rousing himself, he said:

"Miss Hamilton, I am rude. I beg your pardon."

She laughed merrily.

"Why, doctor, you have indulged in similar conduct before. It is no worse to-day than it ever was."

He bit his lip, and ran his hands through his hair; his perturbation was rapidly on the increase.

"I know it. I believe I am hardly sane to-day. I have been reflecting on the philosophy of modern life, and now I want your opinion."

"Well," she queried, with one of her brilliant smiles.

"Suppose—" He caught his breath, and continued, uneasily, "Suppose, for instance, that a poor man loves a rich woman—I ask your advice as a friend, you know—and the woman is free to marry whom she please. Now, do you believe that any modern-society woman would place worth above wealth, and have confidence enough to believe that man free of mercenary motives?"

"If he were noble, yes."

He glanced at her, but her features betrayed nothing. Why had he spoken at all? He must go on now, however; so, passing his handkerchief lightly over his face, he continued:

"Well, Verona—excuse me—I am in that position. I give you my confidence, I love a rich woman."

"You in love! Impossible!"

"Well, it ought to be, I know, but it isn't," he replied, his face flushing painfully, and he started up to walk the floor again.

"Pardon me now. I was rude. You were asking my advice."

He resumed his seat with a sigh of relief.

"Yes, what shall I do? I tell you I am in misery. I love this woman better than myself, and yet I

dare not speak. She is beautiful and good, and I could almost wish her poor, so that she would be nearer me."

Verona's heart began to flutter with fear; perhaps, after all, he loved another, and only regarded her as a friend. The thought made her dizzy, and she struggled to maintain her self-control.

"Will you counsel me?" he said again, lowly.

"Oh, yes. Ask her fearlessly to be your wife—ask her as a man conscious of the purity of his own motives."

"And if she refuse?"

"Your misery, at least, will be changed," rejoined Verona, laughing carelessly.

"Suppose she should be angry?"

"That is your risk."

This cross-examination was becoming painful, as well as annoying, and Verona went to the piano, and seated herself before it. Several pieces had been played when Gerald stated his intention of going. Verona arose mechanically, a heavy weight seeming to press upon her heart. It was true then; he loved another.

"Miss Hamilton," he had reached the door when he spoke, and now turned to look at her again, "I really don't want to leave you without one more word."

She raised her eyes in well-feigned astonishment.

"Of course, you are surprised—my manner is anything but right, and yet I cannot help it. Verona, you are the one I love—you are heaven and earth to me. Forgive me this little deception. I knew not how else to begin. Verona, do you—can you—will you love me?"

Her face was suffused with crimson, her eyes downcast. She was happy, and yet provoked with him for his ruse.

He started forward and caught her hands. His face was blanched with anxiety, his eyes shone with supplication.

"Verona, you are my life, my hope! Speak, for Heaven's sake, speak! Oh, that I could impress you with the truth of my heart!"

She raised her eyes to his, and gazed upon him a moment. It was enough; the next instant her beautiful head was upon his shoulder, her heart was beating against his, her lips were warm with the first kiss of love.

"My Verona! My peerless one!"

"You took advantage of my good nature." "But I dared not ask you without a preface. You will never know my suspense, my fear. But it is over now, and you are mine, my love. Tell me so once."

"I am yours, dear Gerald."



"Will you help me to that seat, miss? I am ill."

Verona, who had run into the park to enjoy the morning air a moment, turned, as these words fell upon her ear, and beheld a woman tottering toward a tree. Springing forward, Verona placed her arms around her, and helped her to the rustic seat, and then held a vinaigrette to her nostrils. Presently the woman regained her animation, and, looking up, said:

"You are kind and good. I thank you very much."

"You are entirely welcome, I assure you. Can I aid you in any other way? If so, I shall be very happy to do it."

"Yes, miss, I suppose you can, though Heaven knows I never dreamt of being brought so low as this. It is hard for one brought up in comfort to ask help of a stranger; but we are creatures of circumstances, all of us. You see my clothes. They are the best I have, and my pride counsels me to wear them rather than sell them. But why do I talk? Pardon me, I'll detain you no longer."

"I am in no hurry. Tell me your condition. It is our duty to aid one another in this world," replied Verona, feeling an interest in her pale-faced acquaintance.

"You have a true heart, miss," said the woman, wiping the tears from her eyes. "It touches me deeply to meet with kindness after my hardships. But I tire you. My name is Briggs. I am a widow, with one married daughter and her child on my hands. The poor girl would work, if she could, but she is not right sometimes, and when she has her spells it's just as much as I can do to master her."

"Poor creature! Where is her husband—dead?"

"No, miss."

"Where, then?"

Mrs. Briggs began to weep convulsively, and her slight form shook. Verona regarded her in mingled wonder and sympathy, and then spoke soothingly.

"Bless you, miss, your tenderness gives me strength," sobbed the woman, patting Verona's hands affectionately. "You've asked me the hardest part of it now, but I'll try to tell you. We lived in Dartmouth, before Emily was married, and she fell in love with a medical student there. Well, the young man seemed honourable and devoted, and so I could say nothing, and my poor, dear child married him. For a little time all went on well, and we were quite happy. But after my granddaughter was born, two years ago, her father left his wife and child, and when Emily begged him to come back he told her to prove that he had married her, and then all came out, that it was a mock marriage; and from that hour my dear child began to lose her mind. Oh, miss, I hope Heaven will forgive him, but I never can, for I've suffered untold agony."

Verona was deeply pained by the recital, and for a moment stood silent, reflecting. Then she said:

"Couldn't you force him to do his wife justice? Had you no friends to help you prosecute him?"

"None, miss; more's the pity. He defied us then, he defies us now."

"Oh, cruel heart, how can he sleep? Perhaps I may help you. What is his name?"

Verona drew forth a pocket tablet, and with pencil in hand waited for the woman to speak.

"Gerald Combermere, miss."

"Good heavens! What did you say?"

"Gerald Combermere, miss."

A low groan issued from the maiden's ashen lips, her face became rigid, and she fell insensible to the earth. Muttering to herself, the woman bent over her, and chafed her wrists and brow. Presently Verona revived, and the woman lifted her upon the seat by her side, and tried to console her, but pride came to the maiden's relief, and she rejected the proffered kindness.

"I am strong now. Here is some money for you. Here is my card; come to my house this evening, and I will give you more."

The woman bent her head, and murmured her thanks.

Verona hurried away, conscious that her strength would soon desert her. As she entered her house she met Mena, who exclaimed, anxiously:

"Why, Verona, what ails you? You are as pale as death."

"Don't talk to me, Mena. Answer my questions. Will you take care of my house for a year or less?"

"What can you mean?"

"What I say. How stupid you are."

"Why, yes, dear, I will do anything for you, and you know it, but—"

"Enough. I leave England to-morrow."

And, motioning her cousin to follow her, Verona went to her room and began the preparations for departure. In the evening Mrs. Briggs came according to appointment, and received ten pounds from her benefactress.

Two days had passed, and in Verona's lovely home Mena Marsh reigned queen. She was sitting by the window now, her long white hands clasped in her lap, her large black eyes downcast. Suddenly the door bell rang, and she started up, an expression of expectancy flying to her features.

A moment later Gerald Combermere entered, and paused surprised at not finding Verona.

"You don't care to see me, I suppose," said Mena, laughing.

"You do me injustice," replied Gerald, in a conventional way. "It is always a pleasure to meet a friend, but I have only a moment to stop, and I would like to see Verona."

"She started for Germany yesterday."

"You must be joking, Miss Marsh."

"Indeed I am not. She has gone to meet Colonel Wardell. They are to be married in Berlin."

Every particle of colour left the young physician's face, his limbs trembled under him, and he sank into a chair.

"You are ill, doctor. Why is this? Ah! I see, another heart has fallen before Verona's fickleness. It is her only failing, but it is a dreadful one. I'll ring for wine."

"No, stop. I have brain enough to bear this. I shall only grow wiser, and there are other women on earth. I shall not lack a happy home because of this."

He spoke hastily, wildly; his own voice rising strong and defiant gave him courage and fortitude. Mena took advantage of it, and moving forward pressed her cold hand against his heated brow. The touch was refreshing, and he forgot the boldness of the act in the relief it afforded him.

"There are others who love you, and who would be true to you," said Mena, softly.

He made no reply.

"Is it wrong for a heart to be honest, doctor?" she queried, gently.

"No, need be ashamed of truth," he answered, evasively, wondering what she was coming at.

"Then reproach me not with boldness or aught else," she cried, clasping his hands, and raising her passionate face pleadingly to his. "For I love you with all my soul! Oh, do not frown upon me. I will be your slave; only let me bask in the sunshine of your love, let me hear you call me your own, your darling, let me rest upon your breast and I will obey you even to taking my own life."

"My poor child! This is sadder still. Calm yourself. I will always be your friend."

"Friend! Oh, cold, cold word! Can love live on friendship? Gerald, hear me, take me, do with me as you will. I have no life but yours."

"You pain me, Mena. This can never be. My love will live and die on Verona's memory, now that she has gone from me. Arise, my poor child, and do not torture me farther."

"You refuse, then, you cast me off!" she cried, frantically. "You trample my heart under your feet, you sneer at me."

"No, not that. I shall hold your secret sacred."

"And that is more than she deserves."

It was Verona's voice.

Mena started back in consternation and dismay, for the folding door had opened and revealed Verona and Mrs. Briggs.

"Gerald, I have been most grossly deceived, but now I am glad of it, for it proves your truth," said Verona, coming forward and taking his hand.

"My poor cousin, with the hope of gaining you for herself, bribed this woman to tell me a false story about you. But at the eleventh hour, the very morning that I, nearly crushed by sorrow, was about to leave England, this woman came to me and confessed all."

"And Mena's assertion respecting Colonel Wardell and yourself was an invention?" said Gerald lowly.

Mena heard him, and, turning quickly, she left the room, and shortly after took her departure from the house. Two years later she married a Paris journalist and forgot her revenge in her happiness.

"And now, Verona, to preclude farther trouble we will be married at once, shall we not, darling?"

"Yes, dear Gerald," and again the beautiful face was bright with beatitude, and has remained so, though she has been married ten years.

G. W. S.

THE Royal Literary Fund distributed 2,170*l.* during the past year in grants, varying from 10*l.* to 100*l.* A large part of the annual income from subscriptions has been invested as a permanent fund; it now amounts to 33,000*l.*, and produces 990*l.* a year.

SEALSKINS should be cheaper, judging from the magnitude of recent "takes." We notice that letters from Halifax give the following account of

them:—The steamer "Sherbrooke" has taken 20,000 seals; steamship "Wolf," 20,000; steamship "Bloodhound," 25,000; steamship, "Walrus," 11,000; steamship "Iceland," 30,000; "Greenland," 1,500; "City of Halifax," 6,000; "Tigress," 7,000; "Ranger," 8,000; "Commodore," 3,000; brig "Rolling Wave," 1,100; "Merlin," 2,000; "Mastiff," 1,000.

## CHARLEY GALE.

By the Author of "The Lily of Connaught."

### CHAPTER XVIII.

CHARLEY was startled by a chuckling laugh, and as he sprang from his recumbent position he saw on the other side of the creek a rough, stoutly built man leaning against a young beech, through the leaves of which the sunbeams fell flickeringly on his sunburnt, dark-bearded face. In the first glance he recognized the features of the burglar at Weldon's, whose appearance had so terrified Jake, and thought he recognized the figure of one of the highwaymen who had attacked Larry's carriage on the night of his arrival at the school. He was springing to his feet when the man made a quiet movement with his hand.

"Sit still, youngster, still," he said, "there's no need of alarm. I want to have a confab with you. This wealthy Weldon has told you his yarn, now you ought to listen to mine; it's twice as good as his'n, 'cause I'm on the inside track, and he's a guesser. You know me?"

"Yes. You are Moggridge—the man that stole my papers!" answered the boy, in a half-questioning manner.

"Your papers?" laughed the man. "They were mine until that rascally lawyer sent me to git a chance to steal 'em, and I was forced to burgle them back again. They was mine. Given into my hands by my dyin' captain—Galton."

"Captain Galton! Was that my father's name?" exclaimed Charley.

"Your father!" sneered Moggridge. "That's as may be. I heard Old Coat-per-cent hint as much to ye, but I told you my story was two better'n his'n. He told you your identifyin' depended on me—Moggridge the convict, into whose hands the papers were strangely put. Ha! ha! Strange if they hadn't a been," he laughed hoarsely, and the boy's blood ran cold as he looked at him, for he believed that he was gazing at the murderer of his father. "Strange if they hadn't a been," repeated the man, musingly, chuckling all the while. "Yes, youngster, your identifyin' depends on me—on me the convict; all the millionaires and schoolmasters in the world can't prove you Captain Galton's child without Muggy Moggridge—they've got an appreciation of hansom faces there—and they christened me—Muggy."

He laughed at this, and Charley, although he did not understand slang, thought the sound of the nickname suited the features admirably.

"As I was sayin'," continued Moggridge, "they can't help ye to the Galton property, for a puff of my breath will blow all the proofs away like thistle-down, and make 'em turn you off like a cur."

Charley started indignantly at this rough simile, and the man laughed.

"Don't git offended," he said, "I know you've been delicately reared and used to livin' in clover. I know your ambitions to live like a nobleman, and it would be kind o' riling with all them ideas to have to take to the swamps and lagoons like I used, and live on alligator tail and sell its leather for to buy your clothes and sweet potatoes; but you'll have to do it all, if you don't behave yourself and obey me."

"Obey you!" cried the boy, springing indignantly to his feet. "Obey you—a convict? Who do you think I am?"

"I can answer that question better than yourself. I am the only person as can answer it," said Moggridge with a grin. "But let's to business. We waste time talking. I am here for your interest and—my own. Do as I bid you, and you will not need to be dependent any longer, or to wait for the schoolmaster's message. Go with me, and you shall be Charles Galton—stay with them and you'll not long even Charles Gale. There's your choice. The turning of a pancake makes or mars your fortune."

Charley looked at his rough interviewer in bewilderment.

Muggy Moggridge mistook his silence for wavering, and with the hasty manner with which vendors snatch up a doubtful customer he exclaimed:

"Come, now's your time, youngster—Moggridge and fortune, or otherwise poverty. I've got the documents, no one else can set you right. If you say with me, jump the creek and come."

Astonished by this strange proposal, Charley gazed in silence at the rough speaker, who had never moved from his leaning attitude against the tree, and Moggridge in turn kept his eyes on the boy's face

with such a look as a torturer might bend upon his victim. It was a strange situation—the fugitive from justice, and the boy whose fortunes he held in his hands face to face within hearing of a festival and only separated by a narrow woodland stream.

"If, as you say, you are here for my interest—" began Charley.

"I said I was here for my own likewise," said the man, in a cool, reminding manner.

"Yours shall not be forgotten." Come and see my benefactor, Mr. Weldon."

The man laughed loud and long.

"Oh, no, I thank you," he said, "no benefactors for me. Benefactors and malefactors! Ha! ha!"

"But I promise you—"

"I don't deal in promises, they're busted. I want no partners. I play my own game, and my hand wins. Come with me or stay."

"I can have no more dealings with such a man."

"With such a man!" sneered the other.

"No. I have done wrong to talk to you so much. I have forgotten the ties that bind me to my friends and to society."

Moggridge laughed derisively.

"I shall proclaim the presence of the escaped convict, and have you arrested," cried Charley, starting away.

"Stop!" cried the man, in a low, savage voice.

It is a very trying thing for the bravest to hear the click of a lock, and see a deadly muzzle levelled at them, and Charley stopped.

"It seems that you've forgot the ties that bind you to where you be as well as the others," said Muggy Moggridge, in a scoffing manner that made the boy ashamed of having stopped. "This seven-shooter's one of 'em. Sit down again."

"I won't!"

The man paused and looked at the boy with compressed lips, and the revolver slightly wavered. In that moment's pause it struck Charley that Moggridge would shoot but was afraid of the report, and he determined to make a dash for it as soon as opportunity should offer.

"Well, I admire your pluck," said Moggridge, at last. "I suppose I'd say the same if I was in your place. You wouldn't be like me if you didn't."

As he made use of this remarkable expression he sprang suddenly across the stream and grasped for the boy's collar, but Charley was too quick for him, and, dodging like a swallow, he flew away through the grove with the man plunging heavily in pursuit.

Charley Gale was a rapid runner, and could easily have distanced his pursuer, only that finding he did not fire he hoped to draw him within reach of arrest. But the man in the rear was as speculative a being as himself, and saw the game.

Charley suddenly felt a rush of wind past his ear; he heard a whistling sound, and a crack not louder than that of a whip, and he knew that the enemy had opened fire. The sensation was new and ticklish, and he could not refrain from turning his head to look out for the second ball. The action was disastrous. The roots before needed watching more than the bullets behind. Charley's toe caught one of them—he fell heavily on the sword, and the next moment Moggridge threw himself on top of him.

"You're a plucky pigeon, by George," he puffed. "You'd make a slapping alligator hunter, if you hadn't got your nose too high for your father's business, wouldn't you?"

He pulled Charley to a sitting position and put his rough face and panther-like eyes close to his.

"You needn't stare at me in such wonder, my kid," he said. "I told you there was ties between you and me. Don't you believe it?"

Charley did not know why he answered, but he could not help it. He said, spitefully:

"No, there can be nothing between us. You are a thief, a convict, a murderer—"

"For shame, Bob—don't call your father names—it isn't dutiful or beautiful," said the man, rebukingly; and then as Charley drew back as far as his grasp would allow him, with an expression of surprise and repugnance on his face, he laughed coarsely. "It kind of takes your breath, don't it, to know that I'm your father?"

"It's untrue!" cried the boy.

"It's true," said the man, in a half-savage manner, shaking his prisoner. "That you are not the heir of this Galton property, as old Cent-per-cent and the schoolmaster thinks—that you're neither Charles Galton, nor Charles Gale, nor Charles anything else—but Bob Moggridge, my son. Oh, you may look, but having looks won't wipe out the truth, though your fineal education has made you ashamed of your parentage. Now you know how our interests are one and the same, and why I won't have any partner but yourself. Now you know why I spoke of alligator hunting and poverty, and why I said your millionaire friends would turn you out to starve."

D'ye suppose if I proclaim you that they'd have a child o' mine, Muggy Moggridge, the convict, a rompin' with their pretty-faced gals and roomin' with their sons? D'ye suppose that if that pink one knewed that you was Bobby Moggridge she'd been content to have passed you coldly to-day? No, she'd a called the stableman to horsewhip you from the grounds."

Charley's heart was sick, for the man's positive words were carrying conviction with them, a conviction that crushed all his hopes and aspirations. He still strove, however, to fight off the belief, and, as he shrank away from the convict and tried to lessen his hold upon his arm he said:

"Let me go. I will not believe it. It is a false hood, a horrible invention. You are laying a plot against me. You tried to drown me in my infancy." "It was the other one I tried to drown. Why should I drown my own? I have spent my life to bring you to this fortune, and now it's in my grasp you kick."

"If it is mine by right," said the boy, "I'll have it. If not, and you should be my father—"

"That's the talk, Bob. I am your father."

"I don't believe it!" said Charley, half-wild.

"Mr. Quillington was the friend of Captain Galton and he knew me from resemblance."

"Resemblance be blessed—resemblance is a gay!" exclaimed Moggridge, with a laugh. "Mr. Quillington is a quip. If you was the heir of the Galton property Mr. Quillington might just as well say that you resembled him, and better. Do you know what jealousy is? Yes, you do, for you was jealous to-day of that booby that's walking with the pink girl. Wasn't you now?"

Charley blushed deep crimson and then grew pale again when he thought how closely this desperado, be he father or not, had watched his every word and action.

"Yes, you do know what jealousy is, young as you be. Well, this friend o' your'n, Mr. Quillington, was so good a friend o' Captain Galton's that he caused him to be jealous, and leave his home, and join the army, and hire another man to steal his child away from his wife and put it to board with strangers where it would be well kept. Are you listening?"

"Yes."

"Well, that other man was me, and he stole the child of Captain Galton, and that wasn't you; but the other man—his name was Moggridge—had a child of his own—that was you. Do you understand? And he thought it was only father-like and natural, d'ye see, to plant his own child in the best quarters and see what it would grow to, and put the other that the quarrel and the fuss was about where his own should a been. And how did the other man's fatherly scheme turn out? What is Moggridge's thanks? His own child's spoiled by education, and fine vittles has made him good-looking, and he holds his nose in the air, away among the million-aires, and sets up for the real Ionahab, and wants to cast the other man overboard and paddle his own canoe; but Moggridge says 'Not for Jonah.' He isn't to be swamped by airs, even if they be millionaires. No, Bob, I've watched and waited for this fortune, and unless I share it with you you shan't have it."

"I don't want it," cried Charley, wrenching his arm free of the man's grasp, but he caught it again. "If this property is at your disposal why do you not restore the wronged boy to his rights?"

"Ah! Bob," said the man, with an affectionate look like the snarl of a bear. "Flesh and blood is the first thing—I want to see you there."

"You'll never see me there."

"Interest is the next thing," continued Moggridge. "Education and company and vittles has made you more like a heir. You'd be easy proved. Tother poor chap is just as low as you're stuck up—just what you'd a been only for me. And when you despise me, Bob—"

"Don't call me Bob."

"That's your name, my boy, there's no rubbin' that out. When you turn again me what would this other fellow be like to do? Why, when I set him right he'll turn on me for my trick. I've studied human nature, Bob. Come, don't be squeamish. I can get lots o' money from that lawyer, Crittles, or Le Rom, but I'd rather have my own. Take your chance, it's the last one. I'll get a market, never fear. Come?"

"Let me go!" cried the boy. "Leave me. I will have nothing to do with you. I should give you up to justice—but go—go—it is disgrace enough to be your child without being like you."

"You cursed whelp!" cried Moggridge, holding the muzzle of the revolver close to Charley's head "if you threaten me—if you use such talk to me, I'll blow your brains out."

His look and action were so furious that the boy involuntarily closed his eyes for the shot, but instead of the expected report the shouts of a dozen youthful

voices, and the tread of many feet, sounded through the grove. The convict threw his prisoner aside with a savage curse and rushed away.

Charley had fallen on the ground. He saw a crowd of young people rushing towards him. He heard Pinky scream. He saw Muggy Moggridge jump the creek and plunge beneath the beech where he had first seen him, shaking his hand towards them.

"Remember, Bob! Keep a close mouth or look out for me—all of you," he cried, and the instant afterwards he disappeared in the wood.

"What is it, Charley? What is it?" cried Frank and Pinky together, as they reached him with their wondering comrades.

"Nothing," he said, rising.

"Nothing!" exclaimed Pinky. "Who was that dreadful man with the pistol?"

"A friend of mine," he stammered.

"A friend!" she cried, catching him by the arms to look in his eyes. "A pretty friend. Oh, Charley, this is the mystery I warned you of."

She saw the sickly paleness of his face, and, passing her arm through his, she led him away from the staring crowd.

"Come, tell me what it is, Charley—do tell me," she said, beseechingly.

"I—I cannot, Pinky. It's nothing. Do not ask me," he said. "I am not well."

"Let us hurry to the house!" she exclaimed, anxiously.

He tried to get away from them, but Frank caught his other arm and they hurried him along, only ceasing their compulsion for the sake of appearances as they neared the company.

"If they only knew—if they only knew," were the words he kept muttering to himself as they went. "Do not name what you saw to your father or mother; it was nothing—it would only fret them," he said, aloud, as they came in sight of the drive and lawn on which the Chinese lanterns were already being lighted. "You must promise me."

"If you repeat your former promise to me," said Pinky.

"Does it need repeating?"

"Yes, I fear you. Mystery has been at work, and there is the look of a fugitive in your eyes," she said, half laughing. "Ain't there, Frank?"

"Yes," said Frank, "a fugitive light, regular will-o'-the-wisp."

"Could we not cancel the promise, Pinky?" said Charley, with a forced laugh.

"No."

"Not if you heard good reasons?"

"Not for all the reasons in the world."

"Well, do not speak to your father or mother, and I will remember my promise. My clothes are stained. I must go to my room—a minute. I won't stay there long. Good-bye, Pinky—that is for the present—don't be afraid."

Pinky looked doubtfully after him, but Frank caught sight of Lillie Morehead and hurried her away in that direction. But all the merriment could not take Pinky's mind from Charley's mystery and his parting manner. She was uneasy and began to think his few minutes very long, but was ashamed to send Frank in search of him until the minutes had lengthened into a half-hour and on into an hour. Then she spoke to her brother, but the fireworks had commenced and he would not move.

At this time a telegraph messenger came from the village with a despatch for Mr. Weldon. The words it contained were:

"Come immediately and bring Charley Gale."

"O. QUILLINGTON."

This had a lively effect on Mr. Weldon. He called for Charley, and not finding him below they sought him in his room. He was not there, but two notes lay upon the table, one to Mr. Weldon, one to Frank. The first one read:

"DEAR MR. AND MRS. WELDON:—Forgive me for having intruded on you so long—I was unworthy of your kindnesses. If you know who I really am you would despise me. Forgive me also for going away in so ungrateful a manner. I dare not trust myself to say good-bye. My whole heart is yours in gratitude. May Heaven repay your goodness, for I am sure I never can. Affectionately,

"CHARLES GALE."

The second was addressed to Frank, and read: "MY DEAR, DEAR FRANK:—I am forced to leave you, and it hurts me to the heart that I can't say good-bye to you and Pinky, especially as we will never meet again. I cannot tell you the reason, but I must go. Tell Pinky I was forced to break my promise, and ask her to forgive me if she can. Tell her I shall always remember that promise, though it is broken, and all her kindnesses and yours. Good-bye for ever, and Heaven bless you both."

"CHARLES GALE."



"P.S.—Give my love to Kitty Nolan when you see her, and tell her I have learned to say 'Katy-did.' She will know the meaning."

On the reading of these missives and the re-reading of the telegram our particular portion of the company fell into a state of feeling which we shall not attempt to describe. Pinksy had guessed the meaning of "Katy-did" out of Kitty, and understood the postscript of Charley's note. She had never been taught to hide her emotions, and did not try on this occasion, and Mr. Weldon departed from all previously known character by speaking angrily to every one that addressed him.

Larry got out the horses to hurry to intercept the runaway at the railway station, while men and boys with the paper lanterns meant for festival show scoured garden, grove, and river bank. Their search was fruitless, Charley Gale was nowhere to be found, and the holiday of the Clarence Institute, begun with such bright prospects of enjoyment, ended in gloom.

(To be continued.)

## FACETIE.

Said a man who tumbled out of a third-storey window, "When I first fell I was confused; but when I struck the pavement I knew where I was."

AN Irish paper says that, "In the absence of both editors, the publishers have succeeded in securing the services of a 'gentleman' to edit the paper this week."

THE NEEDFUL LAW REFORM.—There is one glaring deficiency in the Lord Chancellor's Judicature Bill. No clause provides for the creation of a Lord Cheap Justice.—Punch.

THREE-DECKER HATS.—An American paper says: "We commend to our lady readers the new-fashioned three-decker hats for theatre, concert, opera, and church use. They are constructed with a window in front and rear, to enable persons sitting behind the wearer to see what is going on."

AN ARTISTIC DIALOGUE.  
"What picture have you got this year?"—"Oh! I Thames!"

"Boat?"—"Yass!"  
"Girls?"—"Yass!"  
"In white muslin?"—"Yass!"  
"Ah! good subject!"  
"What's yours?"—"Oh, Thames!"  
"Boat?"—"Yass!"  
"Girls?"—"Yass!"  
"White muslin?"—"Yass!"  
"First-rate subject!"—"Punch."

The defence of a gentleman who had deprived his neighbour of his turkey and roasted it was that he found it on his fence, and seized it in payment of rent of the fence.

## IN THE HOSPITAL.

Surgeon: "Headache—ha—hum—well, bathe your feet in mustard water."

Patient: "But, doctor, you forgot I have no feet."

Surgeon: "Ha—hum—well, bathe your head."

## ON THE FACE OF IT.

Host: "I don't like this Lafitte half so well as the last, Bismarck. Have you noticed any difference?"

New Butler: "Well, sir, for myself I don't drink claret; I find port agrees with me so much better!"

—Punch.

A COMING EVENT.—On Tuesday and Wednesday, the 17th and 18th of June, a fancy bazaar, under the special patronage of Princess Christian, the Duchess of Cambridge, the Princess of Teck, and other distinguished ladies, will be held at the Hanover Square Rooms, in aid of the funds of the Hospital for Diseases of the Throat, 32, Golden Square.—Fun.

A PARIS beggar, on being traced home, was found to be worth 1,535 francs, and several suits of good clothes, in which he used to disport himself at night on the boulevards.

## too good!

Miss Daubigny: "But why won't you come and let me paint your picture, dear?"

Little Girl: "Cos you said you wanted a very good little girl—I ain't one, and don't want to be one!"

Miss D.: "Don't want to be a good girl—but why?"

Little G.: "Cos all good girls die young, and I don't care about that just yet."—Fun.

SCIENCE Gossip.—Botanists have observed that the language of flowers is not a faculty developed alike in all blossoms. Some possess it more than others. For instance flowers of speech have it to a remarkable extent.—Punch.

A GOOD STORY.—There is a capital story told respecting Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen. The story goes that one night lately Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen and another hon. member were in conversation in the lobby of the House, when the managing proprietor of

a daily paper entered and nodded familiarly to the Parliamentary dignitaries. "An extraordinary man that," remarked the Colonial Secretary to his hon. friend, "have you heard that he has bought the Times?" "You do not tell me so?" was the reply. "He must have paid an enormous sum for it." "Oh, no," said the Secretary, "only threepence!"

## PRIVATE VIEWING.

Said our Affix to Himself: "Well, I'm not a bad-tempered man, but I should like to know what the blank-blank people mean by taking up my time and my studio for their thanked private viewings."

## WHO KNOWS?

I sit in the arbour's shadow,  
Just dreaming in idle way  
Of simple and common duties  
That circle my quiet day.

The broom, the pen, and the needle  
Were tied with a thread of care;  
A womanly wonder queried  
The style of a hat to wear—

A phrase in the poet's rhythm,  
The rhyme of a little song  
That echoed with strange persistence,  
Though worthless, the while day long.

All these were the quiet ripples  
That wrinkled my idle thought,  
Untouched by the least remembrance  
Of that which a moment brought.

For, lo! like a wizard's painting,  
There shone upon memory's wall  
The scenes of a by-gone summer  
And friend who had shared them all.

The walk through the meadow grasses,  
The scent of the hemlock bough;  
The snow of the apple blossoms  
That drifted behind the plough;

The chat as we hastened homeward,  
The words of our light good-bye;  
The hand on the gate that lingered;  
Did I summon those? Not I.

They came as do guests unbidden,  
And coming, they chose to stay,  
Till the clock that struck had hushed  
How moments had slipped away.

A step on the walk beside me,  
A sway of the curtained vine—  
A cry, as of dreamer waking,  
And the hand of my friend held mine.

What subtle, unknown forerunner,  
Whose wings I could never see,  
Came fitting to me unbidden,  
Predicting my friend to me? B. E. L.

## GENS.

BEAUTY may excite love, but beauty alone cannot sustain it.

ANGER causes us to condemn in one what we approve of in another.

It is not sufficient for desires to be good; it is necessary that they be regulated.

The creditor whose appearance gladdens the heart of a debtor may hold his head in sunbeams, and his foot on storms.

WOULDEST thou learn to die well, learn first to live well. Acknowledge thy benefits by the return of other benefits, but never revenge injuries.

He who learns not from events rejects the lessons of experience; he who judges from the event makes fortune an assessor in his judgments.

LET a woman once give you a task, and you are hers, heart and soul; all your care and trouble find new charms to her for whose sake they are taken. To rescue, to revenge, to instruct, or protect a woman, is all the same as to love her.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

WATERPROOF COATING FOR WALLS.—The following coating has proved very effective in preventing the penetration of moisture on the weather side of walls. Pitch, 50lb.; rosin, 30lb.; red ochre, 6lb.; fine brick-dust, 12lb.; all boiled together, with constant stirring, and then sufficient oil of turpentine—about one-quarter the volume of the above—added to cause it to spread readily. It is to be laid on as thin as possible with a bristle brush.

ACTION OF SILICATE OF SODA ON FERMENTATION.—According to M.M. Rabuteau and Papillon, silicate of soda has a very decided chemical action in checking alcoholic fermentation, in this respect being somewhat similar to borax, although much

more energetic. A small quantity of the silicate will entirely arrest the fermentation of wine, as also of milk.

KEEPING LEATHER HARNESS PLIABLE.—It is well-known that leather articles, kept in stables, soon become brittle in consequence of ammoniacal exhalations, which affect both harness hanging up in such localities and the shoes of those who frequent them. The usual applications of grease are not always sufficient to meet this difficulty; but it is said that by adding to them a small quantity of glycerine the leather will be kept continually in a soft and pliable condition.

PROPER LIGHT FOR STABLE WINDOWS.—The regulation of the admission of light into stables by the proper location of the windows has been found to be of the highest importance. A side window, according to numerous observations is apt to produce weakness in the eye on that side; a window immediately in front of the manger throws a glare of light into both eyes, in the highest degree injurious; while one higher up, in front, tends to render a horse over-sighted, and consequently liable to shy at low objects.

## STATISTICS.

THE LAST CENSUS.—The population of England and Wales is returned by this Census at 22,711,266 persons, as compared with 20,066,224 in the last Census of 1861, showing an increase of 2,645,063 in the ten years. Of this number 11,125,156 were men and 11,586,110 were women. The growth of the population of this country in the three quarters of the present century which have already expired has been marked with an increase almost as remarkable as that of the United States. In 1801 the whole number of the inhabitants of England and Wales was no more than 8,892,536; in 1831 it was 13,893,797; in 1861, 17,927,609; and in 1871, 22,712,266—an increase of 13,819,730 persons, or 155.41 per cent. in 70 years. The county with the largest population is, of course, Lancashire, with 2,819,405 inhabitants; next in importance stands Middlesex, which, with that part of London north of the Thames, contains 2,589,765 inhabitants; thirdly, the county of York, with 2,436,355, distributed as follows among the three Ridings: The East Riding, 268,486; the North Riding, 293,278; and the West Riding, including the City of York, 1,874,611, Surrey (including South London) is the only other county whose population exceeds a million, the exact figures are 1,091,626. Rutland, with 22,073 inhabitants, has the smallest population of any English county, and Huntingdon, with 63,708, comes next.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

THE annual value of land in England and Wales is estimated to have risen six times since 1088.

ONE of the blessings of the "sugar-plum budget" has been the closing of all the refineries on the Clyde for over a month, until the new duties come into operation.

THE oyster fisheries of the south coast of England have been so monopolized by companies under powers granted by the Board of Trade that the inhabitants of many productive districts are now supplied from France.

THE Wittlebury estate in Northamptonshire, of 6,600 acres, was sold recently for 305,000*l.*, the timber, tillage, etc., to be taken by valuation. The purchaser was Mr. Robert Loader.

THE committee of the approaching Dublin Exhibition have succeeded in bringing together perhaps the finest collection of pictures ever seen in Ireland, amongst them being Frith's famous picture, "The Railway Station."

THE profits at the Monaco gaming-tables during the last season, down to the 1st of April, amounted to 5,890,000*l.* The expenses, which are 1,800,000*l.*, being deducted, there remained a sum of 4,090,000*l.* to be distributed among the proprietors.

THE four bronze sea-horses made for the new fountain at the southern extremity of the Luxembourg Garden at Paris, which had been lying there ready to be set up, have been sent to the Vienna Exhibition.

AT the rising of the Court of Chancery one day recently, Vice-Chancellor Malins said that the estate of business in that court amounted to an absolute denial of justice. He had 193 causes entered. Vice-Chancellor Wickens nearly as many, and there was no Master of the Rolls. Some of the causes had been entered a year.

THE new hotel in front of the Midland Railway terminus in Euston Road is open. The mere fabric will cost the Midland Railway the sum of 350,000*l.*, while the decoration and furnishing of the interior will require an additional amount of 150,000*l.* It is intended eventually to accommodate about 600 guests.

## CONTENTS.

Page	Page
FICKELE FORTUNE ... 97	WHO KNOWS? ... 119
SCIENCE ... 100	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ... 119
THE PROGRESS OF EM ... 100	STATISTICS ... 119
BALMING ... 100	MISCELLANEOUS ... 119
PHOTOGRAPHIC GHOSTS ... 100	
STEAM LOCOMOTION ON COMMON ROADS ... 100	THE FOOT TICKLER ... 503
DAISY THORNTON ... 101	LADY CRETWIND'S SPECTER ... 508
LITTLE SUNSHINE ... 103	THE MYSTERY OF FAIRLAND TOWERS ... 513
A PASTBOARD MODEL OF PARIS ... 105	FICKELE FORTUNE, commenced in ... 514
SINGULAR GOOD FRI ... 105	CHARLEY GALE, commenced in ... 517
DAY CUSTOMS ... 105	MARRIED IN MASK ... 517
MARRIED IN MASK ... 105	LITTLE SUNSHINE, commenced in ... 522
THE FOOT TICKLER ... 109	
THE MYSTERY OF FAIRLAND TOWERS ... 112	
LADY CRETWIND'S SPECTER ... 114	
A GAME OF HEARTS ... 116	
CHARLEY GALE ... 117	
FACETIA ... 119	

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**INQUIRER.**—M. Guizot was born in 1787, M. Thiers in 1797, M. Remusat in 1797, M. Saint-Marc Girardin in 1801, M. Victor Hugo in 1802, M. Dupanloup in 1802, and M. Legouvé in 1807.

**A. W.**—Mr. Glinny has a capital book on the subject of gardening. But order of any bookseller, who without difficulty will readily supply you. The price runs to about five shillings, but somewhat under that little amount. It will fully suit your purpose.

**INQUIRER.**—Distemper means colours ground up with size, gum, or white of egg, and water, as in scene painting. The art of executing work in distemper is called distemper painting. But visit the South Kensington Museum, where admirable specimens may be inspected.

**EPICURE.**—Salmon is preferably cooked by boiling. One weighing ten pounds will require to be gently simmered for about an hour, reckoning of course from the time that the water begins to boil. For fish of other weights from six to seven minutes per pound may be adequately allowed.

**X. Y. Z.**—Consult a respectable physician. Your case is a common one, and one easily curable, and also curable at a slight expense. As this is the summer season bathe as freely as possible, get some good tonic medicine, go into cheerful society, and above all don't fret. More precisely we cannot advise you, as the inquiry is somewhat delicate. Matters will soon be perfectly right.

**A. K. B.**—The lines occur in Nathaniel Lee's tragedy. Ignorant people have often attributed them to Shakespeare. "When Greek meets Greek then comes the tag of war" occurs, we say, in Lee, and is put in the mouth of Clitus (Kleitoe). No quotation has been more mercilessly abused. The English ordinary counterpart is that of a diamond cutting a diamond, or, more vulgarly, "set a thief to catch a thief."

**JAMES A.**—We are compelled to decline your verses, while thanking you for the transmission of them. Honestly we must inform you that they are not of high value, but at the same time we think that by careful study you might eventually produce something really good. Even poets must not despise the meaner steps of study and measurement. Pope, Gray, Horace, and the minor writer Tennyson never did. Poetry claims to be accurate in form.

**W. N.**—For falling off in the hair there are manifold causes, and the general health is commonly at the root of the evil. Strengthen, therefore, the system in the first place. Beyond this wash the head frequently in tepid water, and use, moreover, at constant intervals, a decoction of the herb rosemary. All, however, we repeat, must chiefly of all, depends on the state of the general health. By adopting the plan we have mentioned we think an improvement would speedily occur.

**W. W. W.**—The "Mission of Genius" has been written upon by yourself and by Lord Lytton. We venture to commend his production to your notice, to your contemplation, and if possible to your imitation. The lines are very deficient in the absolute requisites of verse, and the mechanical execution is not exceedingly commendable, or even ordinarily accurate. On these grounds we should advise you to adopt the motto of an ancient family which runs thus: Try again. Practice makes perfect.

**KATHLEEN.**—Your lines, few and modest in extent, are at least hardly up to the established standard. The sentiment is commonplace, as we think you will yourself perceive, on reflection. Nor is the versification fluent. To tell a lady that you love her just as well as a miser loves his riches, or a gipsy his forest free, may be slightly startling, but it is hardly complimentary towards the lady. Any man, supposing he is passionately fond of a woman (as a poet ought to be—see Byron, Burns, and Swinburne), would esteem and adore and doat on her more than on all the rubies that ever princes possessed or all the forests in which the Zingari were ever accustomed to reside.

**GEORGE T.**—Artificial tortoiseshell may be made by melting gelatine with various metallic salts. The appearance of tortoiseshell may be given to horn by brushing it over with a paste made of two parts of lime, one part of litharge, and a little soda lye, which is allowed to dry. This is the same as the Indian hair dye, and acts by forming sulphuret of lead with the sulphur contained in the albumen of the horn, producing dark spots which contrast with the brighter colour of the horn. One of the most extensive comb manufactories in the

world is in Aberdeen, where there are thirty-six furnaces on the works for preparing horns and tortoiseshell for the comb, and no less than 120 iron screw-presses worked by steam.

**LAIN.**—The verses which appeared in the clever comic contemporary referred to bear precise reference to a familiar and interesting occurrence in history. Phryne, a beautiful and glorious and resplendent Hetaïra, a charming woman, as cultured as she was beautiful, was accused on some mean charge before the Athenian magistracy. For a time matters went against her, but the splendour of her loveliness availed towards settling the vulgar malice of her accusers. Those stern Athenian aestes consequently granted to beauty what they might have refused to justice. It is an old, old story. See Gillies's Greece and compare such mighty instances as that of Cleopatra, whose beauty ruled the world, or that of Dubarry, who was once the actual queen of France.

**MILICENT.**—Depilatories act either chemically or mechanically, and therefore are logically divided into those which, by mere adhesion, bring away the hair from the skin, and secondly those which destroy the hair by an effective chemical action. Lime or orpiment, and generally both of them, have formed the main ingredients in depilatories both in ancient and in modern times. The first acts by its well-known causticity, and also, when an alkali is present, by reducing that also, either wholly or in part, to the caustic state. The action of the orpiment is less certain, and is even under some circumstances exceedingly dangerous. We should, by preference—and we advise you in all kindness—recommend you to get from a hairdresser the exact preparation that you require. Its cost would be trifling—certainly not more than a couple of shillings. However, here is a receipt: A good solution of sulphide of barium made into a paste with powdered starch, and the whole to be applied immediately.

## THE HONEYDEW TREE.

There stands the old tree where it stood  
When we were girls and boys,  
The best-loved tree in all the wood,  
The source of many joys.

There, when the earliest spring flowers  
Took their sweet life to renew,  
Beside the brook whose music flows  
Still as 'twas wont to do—

There, underneath its branches bare,  
We met, a happy throng,  
And filled the pleasant April air  
With laughter and with song.

We watched the birds, so long away,  
Back to the old tree come;  
Loved, welcome fugitives were they,  
Returning to their home.

And when the sunnier days came round  
We saw them build their nests,  
And thought the warmest hearts e'er  
Found

Throbbled in their little breasts.  
The shrine of peace was that old tree,  
Where love and pleasure met,  
Where plighting hearts most trustfully  
Vowed never to forget.

There old and young on summer eves  
Were wont to pass the hours,  
And wear the wreath contentment  
Wove

Of her most fragrant flowers.  
My hair may whiten like the snow,  
Age may my sight destroy,  
Yet when I think of that old tree  
I'll always be a boy.

C. D.

**W. J.**, twenty-eight, considered handsome, and loving. Respondent must be about twenty-two, pretty, loving, and domesticated.

**ANNIE R.**, eighteen, tall, dark complexion, loving, and considered good looking. Respondent must be affectionate, and fond of home.

**FLORA**, eighteen, dark, good looking, affectionate and fond of music. Respondent must be fair, good tempered, and a mechanic preferred.

**BARBARA**, 5ft. 5in., dark, pretty, and affectionate. Respondent must be fair, about twenty-five, loving, and fond of home.

**LAURA E.**, nineteen, fair, medium height, auburn hair, pretty, and fond of music. Respondent must be tall, fair, affectionate, and fond of home.

**LOUISE M.**, eighteen, blue eyes, fair hair, considered pretty, and well educated. Respondent must be about twenty-three, and of an amiable disposition.

**AMICUS**, twenty-one, handsome, musical, possessing a good income, and a Good Templar. Respondent must be loving, domesticated, and a blonde.

**MINNIE**, twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall, loving, and fond of home.

**TOM THRESHER**, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty-four, 5ft. 9in., fair, blue eyes, and auburn hair. Respondent must be about twenty; a nursemaid preferred.

**WILDFLOWER**, seventeen, tall, and pretty, would like to correspond with a midshipman in the Royal Navy, who must be tall, of good family and handsome.

**JACK MAIRNAIL**, a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be about twenty, medium height, good looking, loving, and domesticated.

**FRANCIS**, twenty-five, dark, medium height, and with good prospects, would like to correspond with a well-educated young lady about twenty.

**ELIZA**, twenty-four, fair, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must not be more than twenty-six, and in good circumstances.

**FRANCES**, nineteen, medium height, fair, and domesticated, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-five, must be loving and fond of home.

**EMMA**, nineteen, tall, auburn hair, blue eyes, rather good looking, domesticated, and affectionate. Respon-

dent must be a non-commissioned officer; a cavalry regiment preferred.

**CHARLES SPARKES**, twenty-four, 5ft. 5in., dark, and considered good looking. Respondent must be about twenty-two, and of a loving disposition; a domestic servant preferred.

**JEANETTE L.**, medium height, of a loving disposition, good figure, and would make a good wife to a kind husband. Respondent must be under thirty, affectionate, and fond of home.

**ANDREW**, twenty-two, 5ft. 5in., dark complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, considered handsome, and fond of home. Respondent must be about his own age, musical, and affectionate.

**AGURUS**, twenty-one, tall, dark; fond of home and respectably connected. Respondent must be dark, good tempered, musical, well educated, and about eighteen, and thoroughly domesticated.

**ADA G.**, twenty-three, dark, considered good looking, and fond of singing. Respondent must be tall, dark, affectionate and fond of home and children; a musician preferred.

**EDWARD**, twenty-four, 5ft. 7in., dark complexion, and of an affectionate disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen, domesticated and loving.

**SARAH W.**, nineteen, medium height, loving, and fond of music, wishes to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-five, dark complexion, affectionate, and fond of home and children.

**ETHEL**, seventeen, tall, dark-blue eyes, auburn hair, affectionate and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, fair, affectionate and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

**CELIA**, twenty-one, fair, medium height, well educated, loving, and domesticated, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-six of an affectionate disposition.

**JULIA**, nineteen, olive complexion, medium height, good education, and amiable temper, wishes to correspond with a young man of a loving disposition, and fond of home.

**POLLY**, twenty, medium height, light-brown hair, dark-blue eyes, of a cheerful and loving disposition. Respondent must be tall, dark, gentlemanly, and fond of home.

**LILY**, nineteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, considered handsome, fond of music, domesticated, and affectionate. Respondent must be tall, good looking, affectionate, and fond of home.

**JANE V.**, nineteen, tall, dark, and considered good looking. Respondent must be about twenty-four, in a good position, and fond of home and children; a mechanic preferred.

**MARY**, eighteen, medium height, brown hair, hazel eyes, considered good looking, domesticated, of a loving disposition, and well educated. Respondent must be a non-commissioned officer; cavalry regiment preferred.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

**OLIVER** is responded to by—"M. B.," dark hair and eyes, well domesticated, and a cook.

**LESLIE** by—"Maud G.," dark complexion, and thoroughly domesticated.

**DAVID** by—"Lonely Polly," nineteen, medium height; dark-brown hair, blue eyes, very affectionate, and thoroughly domesticated.

**DAVID** by—"Daisy," nineteen, medium height, fair complexion, brown hair, dark eyes, loving and domesticated.

**FRANK** by—"K. W.," nineteen, fair, medium height, and affectionate.

**W. M.** by—"Moss Rose," twenty-one, medium height, dark hair, hazel eyes, considered pretty, good tempered, and affectionate.

**LILY** by—"L. J.," twenty, tall, handsome, dark eyes, affectionate, fond of home, and has good expectations.

**GIPSY** by—"The Swell of the Ocean," twenty-three, 5ft. 7in., dark complexion, blue eyes, and of a loving disposition.

**FRANK** by—"Lizzie," nineteen, considered good looking, dark hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated, and affectionate.

**MILLY** by—"H. J.," a seaman in the Royal Navy, medium height, dark complexion, and has a yearly income.

**SAM W.** by—"Emma," twenty, tall, dark, loving, good tempered, and thoroughly domesticated, and well educated.

**HENRY** by—"Nellie W.," dark complexion, good tempered, of an affectionate disposition, and considered pretty.

**LOTTIE** by—"J. J.," twenty, dark, curly hair, good tempered, and affectionate.

**WALTER W.** by—"Little A.," twenty-two, with dark hair and eyes, perfectly domesticated, and is prepared to share his fortunes as an emigrant.

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